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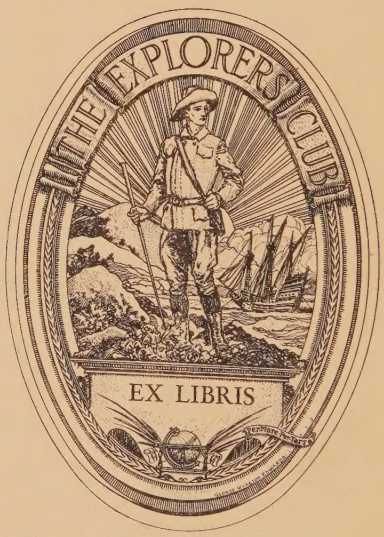

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Henry J. Mob

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WHEN FUR WAS KING

When Fur Was King, by Henry John Moberly, in collaboration with William Bleasdell Cameron. Dutton, 1929. $2.75.

The account of Mr. Moberly's many thrilling experiences whets one's curiosity to know more than is revealed in the mere telling of them. His movements from one Hudson's Bay post to another are related without once drawing an adequate word picture of the post itself or the intervening country. A full description of one of these trading stations, with the details of its operation, would give a much better idea of the life of the times than the sketchy account of journeyings from one point to another. It is hard to believe the co-author ever visited the site of any of Mr. Moberly's activities, for, in spite of the many changes that have taken place, there are still spots to be found which would be an inspiration to anyone. There is much to admire in Mr. Moberly's resourcefulness and endurance, which enabled him, along with other pioneers, to open up a country of such natural richness. We feel sure that his memories are a safeguard against loneliness in the years to come.—H. H. NEWCOMB

Explorers Journal
July-Sept. 1929

HENRY JOHN MOBERLY
July 1926

WHEN FUR WAS KING

BY

HENRY JOHN MOBERLY

RETIRED FACTOR OF THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY

IN COLLABORATION WITH

WILLIAM BLEASDELL CAMERON

AUTHOR OF "THE WAR TRAIL OF BIG BEAR," ETC.

Illustrations by JOHN INNES
and from photographs

NEW YORK

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TO

ADVENTURERS ON ALL FRONTIERS

INTRODUCTION

In a substantial log house of the pattern common forty years ago in the little communities that were the hubs of beginning settlement in the prairie provinces lives a veritable pioneer of the old Canadian West.

Other pioneers there are—though their ranks are rapidly, very rapidly, thinning—but, for reasons that will appear, this lean ranger of the out-trails occupies a niche peculiarly his own. He is tall, this man, sharp-eyed, rugged of feature, with a beard which, though touched by Time's silvering fingers, is still far from white. He walks every morning a quarter of a mile, each way, to the post office at Duck Lake for his mail, and while he reads his paper comments shrewdly on the topics of the hour—the Chinese situation, airplanes versus dirigibles, the Hudson Bay Railway, unemployment problems, the Geneva conference, Mussolini, the next United States presidential election, crop statistics, wars, earthquakes, wheat prices, immigration and, of course, the weather. Mealtime is still an agreeable milestone in his day and his pipe an unfailing minister to his comfort. He likes company, faces round the table, a game of cards, and is ready at any time to sit with a congenial and eager listener, yarning animatedly of truculent tribesmen, of rushing buffalo herds, of maddened grizzlies and of adventure

by mountain and plain, the spice of that wild life of his younger years, until the graying dawn blots out the lamp.

And while he would doubtless class the One Step and the Charleston as mild diversions, comparable to tatting or shelling peas, suited to weak constitutions, but decidedly not dances, it would not surprise one to learn that, despite his ninety-three years, he still upon occasion shuffles a lively toe in " The Jig." For Henry John Moberly, retired factor of the Hudson's Bay Company, and probably the oldest surviving servant of that ancient arm of commerce, is a remarkable—I won't call him old—man.

Mr. Moberly was born in the little town of Penetanguishene, Ontario, one of a numerous family of sons and daughters, on the 2nd of August, 1835. His father was Post-Captain John Moberly, R.N., and his mother Marie Foch, a Polish lady whose ancestral home was in Alsace-Lorraine. Henry John was a younger son. Several of the Moberlys have given distinguished service in the fields of engineering and exploration to the Dominion. An elder brother, Walter Moberly, was in the early '80's engineer-in-chief of the parties seeking a route for the Canadian Pacific Railway from the eastern foothills of the Rockies through the various mountain ranges of British Columbia to tidewater on the Pacific. He was the discoverer of Eagle Pass—a fact not so generally known as it should be. The station of Moberly, on the main line of the Canadian Pacific near Golden, B.C., is, however, a permanent reminder of his work as a pathfinder for Canada's

great pioneer railway. Walter Moberly also built a section of the famous Cariboo Road. He died some years ago in Vancouver, B.C.

Another brother, Frank Moberly, C.E., was an authority on the mountain passes about the head-waters of the Peace River, which he had explored, with a view to ascertaining their possibilities as railway routes, in the '70's.

Henry John Moberly was educated at the Barrie Grammar School and Upper Canada College. Study, however, to one of his restless and adventurous temperament, became irksome, and at the age of sixteen, his father having secured for him a position with the internationally-known English insurance house of Lloyd's, he left school and was sent to the St. Petersburg agency of the firm. Once the novelty of a strange environment wore off life in Russia palled on the boy, and, his roving nature again asserting itself, after two years he quit his employment and returned to Canada.

In February, 1854—now almost three-fourths of a century ago—Moberly, a youth of eighteen, stood one day on the street of his native village, bargaining earnestly with some redmen. He—but let Mr. Moberly himself relate the incident :

" At that time the Government employed Indians to carry the mail on sleds from Penetanguishene to the Sault. They were required to haul one hundred and eighty pounds of mail on each sled, besides their food, cooking outfit and blankets, using no dogs but doing the work themselves. For five dollars the two carriers agreed to take myself and

outfit as far as Fort la Cloche, a Hudson's Bay Company post situated on the north-shore mainland of Lake Huron, opposite Manitoulin Island."

What followed, from that morning in the winter of 1854 up to the date, forty years later, when Mr. Moberly, nearing the allotted span of three-score-and-ten, finally left the service of the Company of Adventurers, is told in the succeeding pages.

This book is Mr. Moberly's, not mine, but I am pleased to have had a part in perhaps rescuing from oblivion a highly interesting and valuable historical record.

I first met Mr. Moberly about the time of the Boer war and soon after he had quit the Hudson's Bay Company and settled on the land at Macdowall, south of Prince Albert. Though then well past sixty he was still active and vigorous. The picture which appears as a frontispiece to the volume was taken by me at his present home near the village of Duck Lake, Saskatchewan, at the end of July, 1926, and within a week of his attaining his ninety-first year. That time in the interval had dealt lightly with him the photograph is the speaking evidence. Many men look older at fifty.

I spent the summer of 1926 along the North Saskatchewan, collecting from the few remaining pioneers, red, white and of mixed blood, such material as I might find relating to the romantic pre-settlement period of the country, and in the course of this work, recognizing that a man of Mr. Moberly's experience must be a mine of interesting reminiscence, I went to visit him. I stayed several

days. In the course of our talks he mentioned casually that some years before he had, at the solicitation of friends, set down the story of his active life in the Great Company's service, but that it had never been published. My interest was at once aroused. I said that it was a shame he had not put the material in a book, for if it was as interesting as it promised the public should not be denied the enjoyment of reading it, adding that I felt sure I could secure its publication.

The upshot of our discussion was that he agreed to obtain the manuscript from the gentleman in whose possession it happened at the moment to be and forward it to me. This he did. I read the narrative, found it, as I had anticipated, a rare contribution to the chronicles of the early days, and undertook to put it in shape for submission to a publisher. The work—a most agreeable one it proved to me—was done last winter.

Several chapters, not in the original manuscript, were written by me from notes taken at the time of my visit and our talks. Of the stories of Indian warfare, some come from Mr. Moberly; others I had obtained years before from active participants in the events described, or from Indians and half-breeds who knew the chief actors and were familiar with their exploits. These stories follow as closely as may be—they were told in Cree, or in mixed Cree, French and English—the mode of relation and the speech of the narrators, and, while they are not essentially a part of Mr. Moberly's story, deal with a most dramatic side of the frontier life of the

period: they are a part of the picture, the pioneer scene, and I make no apology for including them. For while the story is a personal one, it is much more than that: its peculiar value lies in the graphic presentation of a phase of that picturesque life forever passed, so different, so seemingly remote from to-day's, and yet so very near that it is difficult for those who have entered on and possessed the land in the later stages of its development to realize the tremendous change, the transformation, that has taken place. The contrast is too great.

A paragraph or two from a brief preface to his manuscript, written by Mr. Moberly, will be of interest:

"As one whose experience of this country of the Canadian North-West dates from the old days of Red River carts, horses, draught oxen, dog trains, York boats, canoes and pack mules, to these new times of railroads, steamboats, gasoline, wagon roads, telegraphs, telephones, electric lights, steel bridges and all the other conveniences of present-day civilization, I have determined to set out a short chronological account of my adventures, with some description of the country in the era which has gone. I say chronological, but having to go back so many years and writing from memory and as events come to mind, slight discrepancies may here and there have occurred in the sequence of dates.

"I have observed in a great number of books of adventure that their authors delighted in introducing hunting incidents which, to say the least, could never have happened. This author assures his readers that

no incidents will be found in the present volume for the truth of which he cannot vouch.

"During the years I was in the Hudson's Bay Company's service, wherever there was opposition I was sent to cope with it; wherever an Indian camp was likely to be found I went. Thus I became thoroughly acquainted with the country from York Factory on Hudson Bay to Bella Coola on the Pacific Coast, and from beyond the banks of the Saskatchewan to Hay River and Great Slave Lake. And so I hope the book will be found informing to such of my readers as may wish to know something of the earlier days of this country and of interest generally to others."

I cannot do better in concluding this sketch than again quote Mr. Moberly, whose story ends thus:

"All this has passed. The prairie has been ploughed into farms. Railroads have displaced the trails of the Red River carts. Cities, towns and villages cluster round the sites of the trading posts. The buffalo, save for a few enclosed by fences, have perished from the face of the earth. The old, free West is no more. And I, though vigorous still, am an 'old-timer.'

"*Tempus fugit!*

"Yes, and in Western Canada as nowhere in the wide world else."

WILLIAM BLEASDELL CAMERON.

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GLOSSARY

Akumayma : 'Courage!' 'Be brave!' 'On your guard!'

Buffalo Chips : Dry droppings of the buffalo, used for fuel.

Bull Dog : A large vicious fly found in the wilderness, a torment alike to animals and to human beings.

Firebag : Deerskin pouch, the long opening of which was tucked under the belt when travelling. It contained the wearer's pipe, tobacco and dried willow bark.

Gopher : A small burrowing rodent, common on the prairie.

Moostoos : The buffalo. It is now applied to domestic cattle.

N'chawamis : 'My brother,' though not in the sense of blood relationship ; friend, comrade.

Neseem : 'My younger brother.'

Parfleche : Dried hide of the buffalo, from which the fur has been removed.

Regale : A gratuity of spirits issued by the trading companies to their employees on festive occasions.

Smudge : A fire upon which grass, turf or refuse is heaped to make a smoke. In this domestic animals stand to get relief from the flies.

Sosquatch : Immediately, at once.

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PART I

I

I JOIN THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY

After two years with Lloyd's in St. Petersburg, Russia, tiring of the country, I returned at the age of eighteen to Ontario in 1853, and soon afterwards met a member of the party sent by the overland route via the Mackenzie to the Arctic in search of Sir John Franklin. His account of the Saskatchewan country, the immense herds of buffalo, the droves of deer, freedom from restrictive laws, Indians on the warpath and dearth of police, fired my youthful soul. Here, I felt, was the land of all the world after my own heart. As I had a happy knack of getting out of one scrape only to fall into another my friends were of the same mind.

Without opposition from them, therefore, I wrote to Sir George Simpson, then Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, requesting to be sent to the Saskatchewan in the service of the ancient organization.

Sometime in January, 1854, I received a reply from Sir George, enclosing for my signature an engagement for five years, dating from 1st June, 1853, at the usual salary scale of twenty, twenty-five, thirty,

forty and fifty pounds sterling per annum, and accompanied by the first year's salary of twenty pounds.

I was instructed to meet the canoes which came up each spring from Lachine, near Montreal, at Sault Ste. Marie, from which point I was to travel with Sir George to my destination.

I might have remained at home until April and yet have arrived in plenty of time, but the desire of making a start toward the promised land was too strong for my patience, and I left the East in February.

At that time the Government employed Indians to carry the mail from Penetanguishene on Georgian Bay to the Sault. They were required to haul one hundred and eighty pounds of mail on each sled or toboggan, besides their food, cooking outfit and blankets, employing no dogs but doing the work themselves.

For five dollars each the two carriers agreed to take myself and outfit as far as Fort la Cloche, a Hudson's Bay post situated on the north-shore mainland of Lake Huron, opposite Manitoulin Island. Here I remained a few days with the Indian agent, Captain Ironside, at the Manitou Island. I then crossed to the mainland at the mouth of the La Cloche River and made my first acquaintance with a Hudson's Bay Company trading post, and here I met the first Hudson's Bay Company officer I had ever seen.

Since that time I have visited every post of the Company from the foothills of the Rocky Mountains

down the Saskatchewan and the Nelson to York Factory on Hudson Bay; from the source of the Athabasca River to its outlet in Athabasca Lake, and from McLeod's Lake in British Columbia down the Parsnip and Peace Rivers to the mouth of the latter in Great Slave Lake; also from the Rocky Mountains down the Fraser River to Soda Creek, and from Methy Portage to Winnipeg and Montreal, and at every post where an old Hudson's Bay Company officer was in charge I was received with unaffected hospitality.

I waited a few months at Fort La Cloche for the canoes. They came as customary up the Ottawa, thence down the French River to its mouth in Lake Huron and via Manitoulin Island to Fort la Cloche, arriving shortly after the opening of navigation. They brought a letter from Sir George, who was coming by rail through Chicago, instructing me to meet him at Sault Ste. Marie.

After the men had rested for a few hours we embarked, and I found myself really on the way to the land of my desire. The canoes were in charge of Mr. Robert Campbell, a commissioned officer who had spent many years at the Hudson's Bay Company's posts on the Yukon, the lower Mackenzie, Dease Lake and Peel River. He proved a most agreeable companion and gave me much information about the North.

II

I TRAVEL IN THE GOVERNOR'S CANOE

We travelled in beautifully-made birchbark canoes. Twelve middlemen, a bowsman and a steersman comprised the crew. We carried between six and seven thousand pounds of luggage and provisions, besides two passengers, and were prepared to navigate the four big lakes ahead in almost any wind. We called at a small trading post the Company maintained at the Pic and then proceeded to their large establishment at the Sault. We were favoured with fine weather and a pleasant passage.

We found that Sir George had not yet arrived from Chicago, and this being the last link connecting civilization with the North, and the last opportunity the crews would find for desertion or whisky-buying, a strict watch was necessary until they could be isolated in camp on a small island in the lake. Just before they left the officer in charge caught sight of Sir George's Iroquois cook sneaking round the fence, and I was directed to hurry after him. When out of sight of the house I called to the Indian, who stopped at once.

"Where are you off to?" I enquired.

"To get a bottle to keep the cold out," was his reply.

I handed him a couple of dollars. "Get a jar," I advised him. "Perhaps it will be even better."

This questionable proceeding gained me the friendship of all the Iroquois. On my return to the house the officer asked where the cook was.

"Disappeared in the distance," I answered. How, in any case, was it to be expected I should be able to catch a man reputed to be one of the fastest runners in Canada?

In such manner did I carry out the first order I ever received from a man whose word was then law in the country, a Hudson's Bay Company chief factor.

A day and a half later Sir George appeared, accompanied by an old chief factor on his way to take charge of Fort Garry and Judge Johnstone and family, also destined for Fort Garry, now Winnipeg, the judge to dispense the law in Assiniboia. As they had not reached our camp until evening, it was half-past one next morning before we left the Sault.

I was now to learn how Sir George travelled. He had a picked crew of Iroquois canoemen from Caughanawaga, above Montreal, than whom there are no better in the world. They were dressed in red shirts and trousers of rough serge, with red L'Assompcion belts wrapped about their waists. Sir George and his secretary slept until seven o'clock that first morning, the crew paddling silently and steadily, except when Sir George, still apparently asleep, raised his arm and slipped his fingers in the

water. The steersman no sooner noticed this than he put added force into his stroke, the others followed suit, and the canoe fairly leaped ahead.

At seven to the minute we put ashore for breakfast. In half an hour, whether the meal was finished or not, we re-embarked and proceeded on our course. The Iroquois enlivened the journey with their old French-Canadian boat songs while Sir George dictated to his secretary.

At noon we put ashore for an hour by the watch, then went on until after sunset and camped for the night. Each member of the crew knew his work and did it expeditiously and well. Tents were pitched, supper was cooked and eaten, and everyone sought his blankets.

In four days by the old canoe route we reached Fort William, coasting the north shore of Lake Superior and stopping only for a couple of hours at Michipicoton, an important post of the Company.

III

THE H.B.C. COUNCIL AT FORT WILLIAM

We arrived about ten o'clock in the morning. As we drew near the mouth of the Kaministiquia River the old flag of the Hudson's Bay Company broke out, guns were fired and a crowd—gentlemen, Indians and halfbreeds—gathered on the wharf outside the pickets to welcome the Governor and the officers from Moose Factory, Albany and posts between that place and Sault Ste. Marie, who had joined us on our way up Lake Superior.

As Sir George stepped ashore he turned to the head Iroquois guide and announced: "At ten minutes past six o'clock we start"; adding to the chief factor in charge: "Council meets at one o'clock. Just two and a half hours for feasting and talking; then to business."

Fort William at this time was a most important place. Here the chief factors and traders in charge of posts from the Sault to Fort William, north to Moose Factory and Albany and all inland posts between these points, met the Governor in annual conference and settled matters for the incoming year.

Before the council began, however, we sat down

to dinner. Rather, a banquet—one such as, I think, could scarcely be provided to-day at any price; smoked and salted buffalo tongues and bosses, moose noses and tongues, beaver tails from the wooded country, the choicest venison, wild ducks and geese, fresh trout and whitefish, and a lavish spread of delicacies from the old world, brought by the Governor himself. Sherry and old port wine, with champagne, were all the beverages allowed, discipline being very strict in those days. Each person knew his place at table. The Governor sat at the head; next, ranging on each side, came the chief factors, then the clerks in order of their standing, the apprentice clerks from above and below the Sault, the post managers and the interpreters.

Sir George, who loved a quiet joke, played a good one at the expense of the officers and my unworthy self. Suspecting that I did not know the difference between a chief factor and an apprentice clerk, first posting the officers we had travelled with, he introduced me as the new chief factor of Saskatchewan. Those not in the secret were convinced that a youngster like myself, to have acquired such exalted rank, must be the son of one of the largest shareholders of the Company who, dying suddenly, had left me all his shares. I was seated among the "big bugs," and to carry off the joke Sir George took wine with me before anyone else. That settled it, though I myself thought it was merely an act of courtesy toward a stranger.

This joke he carried through at all the posts we touched until we reached Norway House, at the

north end of Lake Winnipeg. Incidentally, I benefited by it considerably, for it gave me opportunities for becoming friendly with a number of the commissioned officers whose acquaintance, owing to the strict discipline observed, it might otherwise have taken me some years to make.

At one o'clock all the officers belonging to the district rose and entered the council room, but I remained in company with the men on their way east, one of whom had been in charge of the Peace River for a number of years and was retiring. The other two were going out on furlough. One had been in British Columbia, the other at Athabasca. I gathered much information from these men, besides hearing some racy yarns.

At five o'clock the council rose. General conversation followed until five minutes after six, when Sir George shouted : " All aboard ! "

At the wharf we found the Iroquois ready with the loaded canoes. Each man took his place, and at exactly ten minutes past six we pushed out, much to Judge Johnstone's disgust, in a drizzling rain.

IV

WE ARRIVE AT NORWAY HOUSE

We carried on up the river until a little after nine o'clock. It still rained when camp was made, but the tents once up and supper partaken of, though Judge Johnstone continued to grumble considerably, we were fairly comfortable.

We re-embarked as usual at one next morning, the weather still disagreeable, mixed snow and rain, so that at breakfast I hoped I should be safe from the consequence of an extremely reprehensible habit of the Governor's. Every morning at that hour it was his practice to strip and take a plunge in the cold water, and being loth to be beaten by an old man I had kept him company. This morning proved no exception to the rule, and I could not help feeling that I was a martyr to my chief's pernicious custom, though I was bound to admit it was a wholesome-enough one.

We travelled in this manner from day to day on the old canoe route up the Kaministiquia River, past the rapids, across Rainy Lake and down the river of the same name, and over the Lake of the Woods, stopping for an hour or two at Rat Portage post, and on down Winnipeg River to Fort Alexander, the

head post of the Lac la Pluie District. Here we met Chief Factor William Sinclair, who had been in charge for some years but was now appointed to the Saskatchewan District, thus becoming my own commanding officer.

We remained at Fort Alexander for dinner, and here I was made the victim of another joke. The Governor passed me a dish which I promptly declined. He urged me to try it, but I still refused. At length he asked me why I would not touch it.

"Sir George," I replied, "I may be a green man, but you won't catch me eating bear's drippings."

This brought a roar of laughter from all sides. The Governor then ate a portion of the delicacy himself, upon which I made bold to test it and to my surprise found it extremely good. It proved to be berry pemmican of the best quality, made of dried pounded buffalo tongues, marrowfat, sugar and dried Saskatoon berries. In appearance it was exactly what I had called it.

After dinner we started again. A fine, steady breeze was blowing when we arrived at Lake Winnipeg, so we up sail and with both canvas and paddles drove to the end of the lake without once putting ashore. At meal time the two canoes were brought together, the outside men paddled while the others ate; they then changed positions, and when all had finished carried on as before.

I may mention that at Fort William we had exchanged our large "double north" canoe, used on the great lakes, for smaller ones carrying between three and four thousand pounds, two passengers and

a crew of six, exclusive of guide and steersman. They were called " north canoes," and were some five and a half fathoms long.

The day we left Fort William the judge grumbled so much about being forced to travel in snow and rain and without opportunity for sleep that Sir George was induced to leave him with two canoes en route for Red River, with permission to travel to suit himself.

We proceeded in the usual way, coasting down Lake Winnipeg to the great river at its foot and in due time turned the last point and came in view of Norway House on an expansion called Playgreen Lake, where we were promptly recognized. Up went the well-known flag, salutes sounded, not only from the post but from the canoe brigades and the York-boat crews from the coast, encamped on both sides of the river, as well as from the Indian tents.

Amid the firing and the shouting we landed at Norway House, the post at which was to be held the council for the Northern Department. Here were gathered officers from Saskatchewan, Athabasca, Peace River, Mackenzie River, Isle a la Crosse and Churchill River, with their followers to the number of at least five hundred men of various nationalities, including Scotch, French-Canadians, Shetlanders, Norwegians, Indians, halfbreeds and heaven knows what else. On landing we were so overwhelmed with handshakings and questionings that we were glad to escape into the house.

And so ended my travels in Sir George Simpson's company, never to be repeated.

V

THE COUNCIL OF THE NORTHERN DEPARTMENT

It may be as well before continuing the account of my personal adventures to refer briefly to that part of the Hudson's Bay Company's jurisdiction called the Red River Settlement, now the province of Manitoba.

In the year 1811 this district was bought from the Company by the Earl of Selkirk for the purpose of establishing a colony. The deed of transfer was made out in the following terms: "To begin at a point on the western shore of Lake Winnipeg in latitude 52.30 north, thence running due west to Lake Winnipegosis, thence in a southerly direction so as to strike the western shore in latitude 52 north, thence due west to the intersection of the parallel of 52 north latitude and the Assiniboine River, thence due south to the height which separates the waters of the Hudson Bay from those of the Missouri and the Mississippi, thence east along that height to the source of the Winnipeg or the principal branch of the waters that flow into the mouth of the Winnipeg River, thence in a northerly direction to

the middle of Lake Winnipeg and thence west to the point of beginning."

Of course these boundaries were sometime afterward curtailed by the treaty which gave to the United States all lands south of the 49th parallel.

The first agriculturists to settle in this district, in 1813, were Scotch. They were joined by one hundred Canadian veterans, and in 1815 by another body of Scotchmen. Later came some French, French-Canadians, Scotch and English halfbreeds from the Northwest Company, besides a few of various other nationalities.

During the first years they suffered much from floods, cold, grasshoppers and attacks from the Northwest Company. The census of 1857—I think the first taken—showed a population of 6522 souls. In 1869-70, while arrangements for the transference of the country to the Crown were in progress, the Dominion authorities excited the fears of the French halfbreeds, who did not appreciate its motive, and under Louis Riel organized a force. They seized Fort Garry, robbed the treasury, made prisoners of a number of their Scotch and English opponents and attempted to establish a provincial government. At the appearance of armed troops under Colonel Garnet Wolseley, however, Riel fled. And so ended this rebellion, together with the rule of the Hudson's Bay Company.

Now to resume my story :

We had arrived at Norway House toward the close of a very hot day in June, 1854. I had fallen asleep in the canoe and my hat had dropped off, leaving

SIR GEORGE SIMPSON

GOVERNOR OF THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY

From a steel engraving made in London in 1857

my head exposed to the sun. This, with a few glasses of Hudson's Bay brandy, a beverage with which I then became acquainted for the first time, had caused me a very severe headache. I was sick the next day and unable to appear for breakfast or dinner. Sir George came to see me and was good enough to place me on the sick list, with nothing to do until the return of the Saskatchewan brigade from York Factory.

Council was called for 9.30 a.m. It was composed of the Governor, Sir George Simpson, and the chief factors in charge of Norway House, Lac la Pluie, Saskatchewan, Mackenzie River, Athabasca, Peace River, Isle a la Crosse, Red River, Cumberland and York Factory. It sat behind closed doors and, with an hour interval for dinner, until five in the afternoon. Everything was discussed and arranged for the coming year for the Northern Department, which reached from the United States border along the Rockies to the Arctic Ocean and east to Hudson Bay and Fort William.

An amusing incident, but one which for a time seemed likely to end in tragedy, occurred after breakfast. M. de S., a French-Canadian, brave but excitable, in charge of Isle a la Crosse, sent a formal challenge to Mr. S., a member of one of the old Scotch families settled in Canada, a cool, self-possessed officer and a gentleman whose personal courage was undoubted. The latter was astonished and asked to be informed when and in what manner he had incurred the resentment of M. de S. The only reply he was able to elicit was :

"I vill not be insulted by any man! I vill shoot him or he vill shoot me!"

At length Mr. S. said: "If my friend insists, I suppose I must oblige him."

A meeting was arranged for the following morning. Sir George, hearing of it, enquired of M. de S. what Mr. S. had done to insult him.

"He called me a 'miserable' at breakfast this morning," said the Frenchman, "and either I vill shoot him or he vill shoot me!"

"Why, so he did!" exclaimed Sir George. "Now you mention it, M. de S., I recall distinctly his using that expression. I won't interfere further."

Sir George called Mr. S. aside and voiced his surprise that that gentleman had, at the public mess, called his brother officer a miserable person.

Mr. S. heatedly denied the charge, but the Governor insisted that he had himself heard it. Mr. S. was amazed. Although he was quite positive he had made no such statement he could not convince others of his innocence.

Mr. S. and M. de S., it developed, slept in adjoining rooms, separated only by a thin board partition. M. de S. was a heavy snorer and rather touchy about it. Mr. S. had appeared late at breakfast that morning, and when Sir George remarked it, explained that "That confounded miserable kept me awake all night!"

The Frenchman at once took this as applying to himself and his snoring propensity, and became instantly and properly indignant. What Mr. S. really referred to, however, was Victor Hugo's

Les Miserables, in which he had become interested during the evening and continued reading until near daylight. Sir George had seen the joke at once and in a spirit of fun kept it up all day, divulging the secret, only in time to prevent real mischief, at dinner in the evening. As a result, the only shots fired were from the necks of Hudson's Bay dark brandy bottles.

VI

THE SASKATCHEWAN AND MY FIRST BUFFALO

By noon of the third day the deliberations of the council were concluded, when Sir George immediately embarked on his return to Montreal. We watched the great canoes, the flag of the Hudson's Bay Company proudly floating at each stern, the Iroquois crews chanting their boat songs, until they had turned the first point; then the men of the brigades became active in loading provisions and manning their boats.

First to start was the Saskatchewan brigade of sixteen boats, manned by crews of eight men each; then followed the Lac la Pluie brigade of six boats, next Cumberland with six boats, and lastly the two brigades from Red River, which did not belong to the Company but to other merchants from that locality, going to York Factory for goods brought by the Company's ships for them from England.

When the last brigade had disappeared everything seemed changed. The tom-tom of the gambling Indians, the energetic if far-from-polite language of the voyageurs, forever quarrelling and brawling among themselves, the barking of droves of sled dogs, chatter

in a dozen different tongues and other outlandish music—all seemed to have sunk to dead silence.

Part of the now intervening time I spent in visiting the mission at Rossville, situated two miles from the fort and the shores of Playgreen Lake.

Norway House is on the north side of a short river which connects Lakes Winnipeg and Playgreen. Its site may be called an island, for it is simply rock surrounded by swamps and the river. Playgreen Lake is a most attractive body of water, and contains a number of picturesque islands.

The rest of my time was occupied in fishing and occasionally, not often, pretending to do some office work.

In a few weeks the brigades from York Factory had begun to arrive and pass on their way to their several destinations. At length the Saskatchewan brigade turned up one afternoon, prepared to leave early next morning. I may mention that of the fourteen men who sat down to the table that night at the farewell supper only two are now living, myself and one other who had been in the service for many years. He had previously served at Honolulu in the Sandwich Islands, where he had fallen in love with the chief's daughter and wanted to marry her. The Governor, not approving, had ordered him to The Pas in Saskatchewan. Had he remained in Honolulu he might to-day be the proud king of the Sandwich Islands instead of an obscure farmer on the banks of the South Saskatchewan. He is still exceedingly active for a man of his years—four score and ten—although he has broken both legs and ribs running buffalo.

Next morning after breakfast we pulled out, reached Norway House Point on Lake Winnipeg, and there, the wind being unfavourable, we remained for seven days, being joined in the meantime by the Cumberland and Athabasca brigades.

On the seventh morning about eight the head guide gave the order to embark. It still blew hard, but he was a good judge of weather and scented a change of wind, so away we went under full sail to the foot of Grand Rapids, a little above the point at which the Saskatchewan discharges into Lake Winnipeg. Three days were occupied in portaging the outfits of goods, the boats and canoes past the rapids, up which it was impossible to haul them.

The morning of the fourth day we made a fresh start, and after a fair trip, in which oars, sails and tracking lines were employed according to the needs of the moment, we arrived at Fort a la Corne, then the first post in the Saskatchewan District and of which my old friend and travelling companion, William Spencer, was in charge. After landing the outfit for that point we proceeded to Carlton House, the next post.

On the way up we had reached the prairie country, which began about three miles above Fort a la Corne. Here I and three other clerks landed and hunted along the banks, rejoining the brigade at meal times and for the night camp. We killed quantities of ducks and prairie chickens, and one day when out alone I sighted five jumping deer. I approached and shot one on the spot where the Royal North-West Mounted Police barracks at

Prince Albert now stands. This was the first large game I had killed in the Northwest, and when I carried my spoil into camp that evening I certainly felt proud of my prowess, which I could not help comparing in my own mind with that of Nimrod, to no great advantage of that mighty hunter.

At Carlton House we dropped the outfit for that place and two boats. We remained two days to rearrange the cargoes, and during our stay gave the usual regale of rum to the crews, which prompted a dance and half a dozen fights among our men.

It was decided when the brigades were ready to leave that some of us should ride overland to Fort Pitt, the officer in charge of which post had come down to meet his crews. He was an old hand in the country and the riding party could be safely left to his guidance. We crossed the river to the north side in the afternoon and camped about five miles out. The horses were picketed, and prairie chickens and wild ducks sufficient for supper killed. After the meal we "greenhorns" listened open-eared to tales of the West. Some of these I rather thought at the time must have been borrowed from Baron Munchausen, but later I found they were even short of the truth.

We left at sunrise next morning. After riding for a couple of hours our Indian cook suddenly cried:

"*Moostoos!*"

We looked in the direction he indicated, and about a mile ahead a herd of fifty or sixty buffalo immediately came in sight. How my fellow-travellers, who had seen buffalo over and over again, felt I do not

know, but for myself I would not have changed places with anyone in the world. I rode a fine horse, a grey which I had been assured was a good buffalo-runner, carried a double-barrelled gun loaded with bullets, and there before me ranged a band of buffalo on an open prairie with not a twig to obstruct the view!

We advanced at a trot until the herd made us out. The great brutes then turned and we broke into a gallop, approaching nearer and nearer until, realizing that we were in pursuit, away they thundered while we plied our whips and urged our horses forward.

My mount proving the swiftest in the party I soon closed with the herd and fixed my eye on what I judged to be the largest bull. As I neared him I observed his tail stiffen and heard shouting behind me which I mistook for cheering. I was on the point of distinguishing myself by "burning the hair," as the expert hunter I had often been told did, when a shot rang out behind me and down went my bull, carrying with him my chance of adding to my wreath of bay acquired by virtue of my recent exploit with the jumping deer.

To say that I was disgusted is to put it mildly. I was burning with rage, and it was hard indeed to convince me that that shot had really saved my life and that of my horse.

"Boy," said my native preceptor, "w'en you see de bull's tail go up, look out! He plant hees forefeet on de ground, hees hind quarter' swing round, and den w'ere you t'ink you are? W'y, on hees horn'!"

VII

EN VOYAGE WITH THE SASKATCHEWAN BRIGADE

Carlton House, which we had just quitted, consisted of a group of buildings in the form of a square. They included the officers' house, servants' quarters, stores, trading shop and other structures. The whole was surrounded by a stockade 28 feet high, with strong log bastions at each corner from which a few old metal three-pounders showed their muzzles. A supply of flintlock trade guns and some old Queen Bess muskets, more likely to knock out the man who fired them than the object aimed at, completed their armament.

This was the first prairie post on the Saskatchewan and consequently in the fighting ground between the Crees and the Blackfeet confederacy, which comprised, besides that tribe proper, the Bloods, Peigans, Gros Ventres and Sarcees. It was also the first post where at this time the rum trade was in full swing, most of the trade from the plains Indians being paid for in liquor. Stockades and a large force of men were therefore necessary adjuncts to such posts.

Besides my big bull two fine cows had been killed, the tongues and bosses cut out and the remainder left to the wolves.

We travelled on the north side of the river, passing by Redberry and Jackfish Lakes, as being safer from the mischance of falling in with some prowling war-party on the lookout for scalps, horses or women. Buffalo were in sight most of the time. Occasionally, too, an elk or red deer would break from a poplar bluff and trot off across the plain. Innumerable prairie chickens rose almost under our horses' feet, each slough swarmed with ducks, at this season fat and so tame that it was scarcely sport to shoot them. This, however, did not render them less appetising roasted before a campfire. In those days the Saskatchewan was a hunter's paradise.

On our fourth day from Carlton we reached Fort Pitt, which was laid out in much the same fashion, with the same square stockade and bastions. It was situated on a fine open plateau close to the river and surrounded on three sides by high prairie hills. A large band of Plains Crees were camped close by the fort, and as soon as we were recognized the usual salutes were fired by every man who possessed a grain of powder.

We were ahead of the brigades. When they arrived the outfit for the fort was unloaded, and that for Lac la Biche laid out ready to land at the Snake Hills, whence a horse track led to the northern post. Then the men got their regale, and the customary dance and sparring began, to be kept up until morning. The gates were now closed and the

Indians permitted to trade. This they proceeded to do, to the accompaniment of tom-toms. Immediately after dark orders were issued to stop the grog, which meant that not a drop more was to be obtained at any price.

We were in the officers' house when word was brought that the Cree chief and all his braves were chopping at the gates with the intention of raiding the post. I expected to see every man rush for arms, prepared to fight for his life. Our chief officer, however, coolly rose and calling half a dozen strong men, ordered the gatekeeper to throw the gate open. The chief stepped in and promptly received a blow under the ear that laid him flat. Our officer then enquired "if any other dog wished to enter," but none volunteering, the gate was forthwith closed and bolted. We had the chief a prisoner, and his followers dared do no further damage.

This was the same band of which Big Bear was chief during the last Riel rebellion of 1885. In 1854 they numbered some three hundred tents.

Next morning our brigade pulled out, and the same routine was followed from day to day, the boats for the most part being hauled against the stream, with occasional breaks of rowing and poling.

We delayed a few hours to land the officer in charge of Lac la Biche with his outfit and then proceeded on our way to Fort Edmonton, the head post of the Saskatchewan District, arriving there about a month after leaving Norway House.

I may take this opportunity for a description of the brigades and their methods of travelling. That

with which we were connected consisted of sixteen boats, each with a cargo of one hundred pieces. Most of the cargo was rum, 33 per cent. above proof, tobacco, and ammunition, the remainder consisting of dry goods and groceries. The boats were 28 feet keel and 9 feet beam, sharp at both ends and very like the regular whale boats. They were manned by a crew of eight, exclusive of the steersman. The whole brigade, with the exception of the so-called "light-boat," was under the rule of the head guide, who had supreme command from the time of leaving one post until another was reached, and no officer or clerk in the party might interfere with him in any way during that interval.

The head guide was chosen for his experience as a steersman. He knew the route well, was a good judge of both water and weather, and, as a good fighter, could if occasion arose, enforce his orders with an application of elbow grease. The light-boat, on the other hand, was quite above his control. It carried the chief factor in charge of the district and might travel either with or without the brigade at his pleasure. It was equipped with more comfortable stern sheets than were the other boats, and the crew were picked men.

The crews of the brigade consisted of French-Canadians and Scotchmen, principally from the Orkney and Lewis Islands, with some halfbreeds and Indians.

The boats were provisioned with tea, pemmican and dried buffalo meat, no flour, sugar or other

TRACKING.

luxuries being permitted. The provisioning was based on a rate of two-and-a-half pounds of pemmican or three pounds of dried meat per man per diem.

Each morning during the whole summer at the appearance of daylight the guide called the steersman to boil the kettle, and when tea was made the crews were aroused. A bite was taken and they pushed out. At eight o'clock they had breakfast, after which they carried on until midday, when an hour was allowed for dinner. At sunset camp was made for the night. The only real rest the men got was when they were caught on a lake by a strong head wind and were obliged to lay up ashore, or when it rained too hard for travelling.

VIII

THE TRADING POSTS AND THE INDIANS OF THE PLAINS

Our arrival at Fort Edmonton was hailed by the usual salutes of firearms, reinforced by shots from a brass six-pounder mounted on the river bank in front of one of the main gateways.

The Saskatchewan District, of which Edmonton, as I have said, was the head post, comprised Fort a la Corne, Carlton House, Fort Pitt and the Rocky Mountain House, on the River Saskatchewan ; Lesser Slave Lake on the north-west end of the lake of that name ; Jasper House, situated inside the first range of the Rockies ; and Fort Assiniboine on the Athabasca River, a short distance above the present town of Athabasca Landing.

A description of the first three posts has been given. At Edmonton was made the distribution of the outfits for the other posts. That for Jasper House was despatched on pack horses to Fort Assiniboine, where it was transferred to a boat and taken upstream 120 miles to its destination.

The Lesser Slave Lake brigade followed, also with pack horses, the same route as far as Assiniboine,

thence by boat downstream to the mouth of Lesser Slave River, up that stream to Lesser Slave Lake and across the lake to the post.

Following the despatch of these brigades the outfit for Mountain House was packed and sent off in two boats. Mountain House was located on the south side of the North Saskatchewan close to the mouth of the Clearwater River and about eighty miles from the Rockies, in plain view from the fort.

On reaching Edmonton we learned that the officer in charge of the Mountain House was ill and unable to travel, so I was appointed to the management, with an old experienced servant as my lieutenant. But here I must again digress in order to describe the various tribes of Indians that resorted to these places.

The Woods Crees of that part of the country traded at Fort a la Corne, and no rum was sold to them. Carlton House had a number of Plains Crees who could buy all the rum they were able to pay for, and a large body of Woods Crees from the north side of the river who, of course, were supposed to get no rum. Fort Pitt, like Carlton, had a large band of Plains Crees as well as the Woods Crees from the north side and small bands of Chippewyan Indians belonging to Cold Lake.

These posts on the Saskatchewan marked the limit of the country patronized by the Crees alone.

Edmonton was the first post at which the Blackfeet were accustomed to trade, and then in summer only. A number of Plains Crees, Woods Crees and half-

breeds from Lac Ste. Anne also made Edmonton their base of supplies. The Mountain House was strictly a winter post and solely for the convenience of the Blackfeet and a small band of Woods Stonies; the Crees never risked their lives there.

Fort Assiniboine was for the Woods Crees and some small bands of Stonies; Lesser Slave Lake entirely for Woods Crees. Jasper House was headquarters for a band of Iroquois from Eastern Canada, married to Cree women and settled there, and also for a small band of Shushwap Indians from the head of the Fraser River about Tete Jaune Cache, west of the Rockies.

Open war existed between the Plains Crees and all the Blackfeet nations. Throughout the summer war parties of both sides kept the warpath after scalps, horses and women, and many a fierce engagement resulted. There was also a sort of miniature war between the Woods Stonies against the Plains Crees on the one hand and the Blackfeet on the other, but not many scalps were taken. The Stonies secured an occasional scalp, but the war was limited chiefly to horse-stealing on the part of the Stonies, who then took to the woods, where the Plains Indians were afraid to follow.

IX

MY FIRST WINTER IN THE SERVICE

After the usual hauling, rowing and poling, we arrived within a few miles of Mountain House, when we were met by a body of some hundred mounted Blackfeet braves, notice of our approach having been taken ahead by scouts. As many of the horsemen as could manage it soon had their lassoes tied to my boat; they then proceeded to tow us on our way, much to the disgust of the old steersman, for these wild young bucks cared little whether the tow-lines were long or short, the water deep or shallow. Consequently the boat, from having been rough-hauled by horse-power over stones or whatever else came in the way, when we landed leaked a good deal.

This was my first personal introduction to the Blackfeet nation and to my first post, in which I was supposed to be lord and master of all I surveyed, besides a good deal out of the range of vision. Here was I, the youngest clerk in the district, in charge of one of the most important, and at that time certainly one of the most hazardous, posts in the country. When we landed on the 28th of October, 1854, all

that I had wished for had fallen my way. I had seen and shot buffalo, had beheld the warlike Crees, and now I was a power among the enemies of these redoutable warriors, for I had come as the master of the post and clothed with authority to deal as I saw fit with the no-less-truculent Blackfeet.

As soon as we had disembarked the Indian chief was called to the front and presented with a quantity of tobacco for his braves to smoke. He was then asked to take his band to their own camp until we had put the fort in order. It had been abandoned since the spring, and we required leisure to settle down, repair the stockades and buildings and put everything in readiness for the rum trade. The Indians immediately retired, and during that day and the following, although their camp was within a hundred yards of us, not a single man approached the post until apprised that we were ready for them.

Mountain House was surrounded by the usual 28-foot pickets, with a block bastion at each corner and a gallery running all round inside about four and a half feet from the top, each bastion containing a supply of flintlocks and ammunition. Within was a square formed by the officers' houses, men's houses, stores and general trading-shops, a square between this and the pickets for boat-building, with forges and carpenter-shops, another square for horses and a fourth for general purposes.

There were two gates, the main gate on the north and a smaller one on the south side leading through a narrow passage the height of the stockade into a long hall. In this hall, amid much speech-making,

the Indians were received, the calumet passed and two glasses of rum of medium strength were given to each Indian. They were then turned out and the gates closed against them, the only means of communication being through two port-holes some twenty inches square opening through the stockade into a small blockhouse through which the trade in rum was conducted.

Dried and pounded meat, cakes and bladders of grease, buffalo hides, dressed leather, wolf skins and other things were taken in exchange for rum, and in a short time the effects were plainly visible. Horses were often pledged for rum and were always duly delivered after the drinking was over. The rum, being 33 per cent. over proof, went a long way when mixed liberally with Saskatchewan water. After the first two glasses the rum was diluted—one of rum to seven of water—and for this mixture a stiff price was obtained in "made-beaver," the currency of the country; dollars and cents or pounds, shillings and pence were unheard of.

A horse was worth about twenty made-beaver; a good robe, two; a dressed hide, one; a parflech full of fine fat dried buffalo ribs and bosses weighing round forty pounds, one made-beaver; a wolf-skin, one-half; red fox, one; cross fox, two; silver or black, five; five pieces of grease (each weighing over twenty pounds), one; a fat buffalo cow cut up and put on stage, one-half; and eight buffalo tongues, one made-beaver.

One and a half feet of Canadian roll tobacco sold for one, one-fifth of a pound of vermilion mixed

with flour for six, a bunch of seed beads or a scalping-knife one, a small country-made axe two, and a larger axe four made-beaver. Ammunition was valued at ten balls or one quarter-pound of gunpowder for a made-beaver.

The plains Indians bought practically no dry goods, as they dressed in leather. Excepting copper kettles the above comprised the list of their wants. We kept a few so-called chief's dresses—the cast-off red-coat suits of the military, supplemented by tall stovepipe hats with bunches of still taller feathers attached. It was a common thing for an Indian to give a good buffalo-runner—a fast trained horse—for such a costume.

X

I CARRY OUT INSTRUCTIONS AND GET PROVISIONS

EARLY in the winter Chief Factor William Sinclair wrote me from district headquarters at Edmonton that provisions were likely to be short that year in the north, and I was to spare no effort to secure a good supply from the Blackfeet and other tribes in constant touch with the buffalo, and who frequented the winter post of Rocky Mountain House. Provisions, as has been explained, meant dried buffalo meat, grease and pemmican.

The rum trade had at this date become increasingly in disfavour with the Company, although spirits were still an important part of our outfits. In fact, without liquor we should have been at a serious disadvantage. "Free traders," mainly from Montana Territory, overran the region to the south, and, while the Blackfeet preferred to trade with us, they would forthwith have transferred their patronage to these men had they been unable to procure from the Company the coveted firewater which was the chief stock-in-trade of our opposition. By hook or crook provisions must be obtained if privation—starvation possibly, even—was to be avoided.

I knew of just one way in which I could be certain of securing what I wanted and I prepared to adopt it.

The snowfall had been light and I loaded several carts, and accompanied by my interpreter and sixteen others—halfbreeds and a few Orkneymen—I started one morning for a camp of some sixty lodges of Sarcees and Blackfeet, thirty miles to the south, whom I had learned were well supplied with provisions.

The Blackfeet confederacy, as has been said, included the kindred tribes of Bloods and Peigans and also the Sarcees, an alien people of Athabascan stock, originally from the Peace River country but who for a century had been associated as allies with the Blackfeet.

We made camp a few miles from the Sarcee lodges and then went on with our carts. The Sarcees made us welcome and put together a number of their lodges to form a store from which to conduct the trade. Our goods, of course, consisted principally of rum, plentifully diluted. We selected our guard and the trade began.

It should be explained that before commencing a rum trade the custom was for the trader to choose from among his prospective patrons four or five outstanding warriors to keep order and prevent hostile demonstrations by their more or less inebriated fellow-tribesmen. The guards were in honour bound to drink nothing during the progress of the trade. A portion of the liquor was put aside for them so that the guards might indulge in festivities on their own account when the others were finished and were once more sober.

It happened that at the time of our arrival the head chief of the confederacy, Old Swan, a Blackfoot of great authority, aged but still active, was visiting Grizzly Bear, an immense man, head chief of the Sarcees. I chose Old Swan to act as my guard and, owing to his standing, thought it unnecessary to appoint others.

The trade went well. My carts were almost loaded, and in another hour I should have been on my way back to my post, when a war party of thirty Bloods under a war chief named Makwayamakan, or Running Wolf, arrived from the south. These men had not been hunting and of course had nothing to trade.

The war party was not long in learning that I was trading liquor, and came to me demanding a keg on credit. Being met with a refusal they went away, but managed to beg a few drinks from the Sarcees. Thus fortified they returned to the big lodge and their demands became more insistent. I again refused to supply them, but the drinks they had secured were beginning to take effect, and they grew constantly more aggressive and insolent.

At length Running Wolf drew his heavy skinning knife and stepping out in front of me began to brandish it before my face. I had become accustomed to attempts at intimidation by Indians in liquor and paid him no attention. Presently, however, the blade, no doubt inadvertently on the Indian's part, just touched the tip of my rather prominent nose.

I should of course have remembered the old adage

about discretion and treated the affair as a joke. But I was young and inclined to allow my somewhat hasty disposition and dignity to assert itself without much thought as to possible consequences. Besides, I was already incensed by the none-too-flattering attention of which I had been the target, and my right fist shot out. It caught Running Wolf squarely between the eyes and laid him flat.

The clamour which had surged about me died instantly. Astonishment for the moment gripped the warriors; then followed an outburst of furious rage. The war chief sprang to his feet. His followers, pressing in behind him, pushed him violently against me. My fighting blood was now up. Again I struck, and once more Makwayamakan measured his length on the grass.

The war party went wild. They began to pull at the leather covers of their guns.

"Shoot him! Kill the white dog!" they howled, jumping in their frenzy up and down in front of me.

I glanced round. My valiant retainers were nowhere in sight. It began to look as if my days in the fur trade were due for an abrupt end.

Old Swan had sat unconcernedly smoking alongside the door of the big lodge during the uproar. Suddenly on my right a menacing voice cut the din:

"Stop! Another move, any of you, and your chief dies!"

I turned. Piskun, my interpreter, dark eyes flashing, his Colt pointed at Old Swan's head, stood at my elbow. Of my brave seventeen he alone had remained faithful to his chief.

My own hand was on the gun at my belt, but I had had sense enough not to draw it.

Hugh Munro, or Rising Wolf, was a Scotchman, a former Hudson's Bay Company employee who had left the service and taken a Blackfoot wife, and Piskun was their son. Piskun was himself married to a Blood woman and she had relatives among the war party.

The effect of this speech bewildered me. The war party immediately split. A third rushed over and ranged themselves alongside myself and my interpreter. The two factions, fingers crooked about triggers, stood glaring at each other across their levelled rifles, each waiting from the other the next hostile move.

By no token had Old Swan betrayed an awareness of the gun aimed at his head. Now he coolly knocked the ashes from his pipe, rose to his feet and stretched out an arm.

"To your tents!" he commanded sternly.

For an instant no one stirred; then the rifles came slowly down, and with sullen faces the warriors turned and stalked silently away.

Old Swan faced about and addressed me. "Now, spill that liquor."

I complied with alacrity. "You had better go to your own camp," continued the chief. "Leave everything just as it is. Come back to-morrow. Nothing will be touched."

It did not take long for Piskun and I to mount and quit the Sarcees. No sooner had we arrived at our camp than heads, black and red, began to show from

the surrounding scrub. Finding the coast clear and the danger apparently past my retinue emerged and came sheepishly one by one to the tents. Many of the old officers of the Company, including myself, hold the gold medal issued some years ago in recognition of thirty or more years' faithful service. I have often wondered whether among them may have been numbered one of the gallant sixteen of my 1854 Sarcee rum trade.

I returned next day for my carts. The Indians were now sober and friendly, and, as Old Swan had promised, I found nothing had been disturbed. The chief had lost his share of the liquor, but in lieu of it I gave him one of my best horses. Not that it meant much to Old Swan—he had three hundred of his own—but the gift was at least evidence that the Company was not unappreciative of his good offices.

We reached Rocky Mountain House a day or two later, and the provisions I had traded helped materially to forestall the threatened food scarcity that year in the North.

XI

I RETURN TO FORT EDMONTON

The winter of 1854-5, my first in the country, passed, filled for me with novelty. Sometimes I was off to the plains with horses and flat sleds for buffalo meat, sometimes shooting prairie chickens, of which there were hundreds everywhere, and at Christmas I made a visit to Edmonton. We did not find the time long; I have put in many a longer winter since.

The Christmas trip proved a rather hard experience. We left the Mountain House with one train of dogs to carry our bedding and with only enough provisions to take us to Gull Lake, some distance south of Pigeon Lake, where more provisions had been cached. Our party consisted of a Scotch halfbreed, a Scotchman, a French-Canadian and myself. The halfbreed, the only one of us who had ever travelled that route, acted as guide. All went well as far as Pigeon Lake, but here we found that wolves had destroyed the cache. Though out of food we determined to proceed, relying on such prairie chickens and rabbits as we might shoot should we not fall in with Indians.

We camped at Pigeon Lake, leaving before daylight next morning, when a high wind arose, followed by a regular blizzard. Presently I noticed that we had left the old horse trail. I drew the attention of the guide to this, but he said he knew the country and on we went. The blizzard lasted three days, and heaven knows where we wandered during that period. On the fourth day it cleared, but the snow was then very deep, the dogs were exhausted and we were little better. I now refused to follow our guide any longer and took the lead myself. That day I shot an owl and a prairie chicken, which helped to allay our hunger. Next morning I shot a rabbit, but from there to Edmonton we got nothing more. We reached the post about 10 o'clock p.m. of the seventh day from Gull Lake, having struck the Mud River half a mile above the point where it merges with the Saskatchewan just west of Edmonton.

After eight or ten days of Hudson's Bay hospitality we started with six horse-sleds, loaded with extra supplies needed for the trade, on our return trip. On our arrival at the Mountain House we found a mob of Blood and Peigan Indians in the midst of a big spree and all the gates locked. It taxed our whole force, when the gates were opened for us, to keep the Indians out, and before I succeeded in getting into the fort my face and hands were plentifully smeared with grease and vermilion acquired through the handshaking I had had to endure from the drunken rascals.

Such was the fur trade among the Plains Indians in the '50's.

We remained at Mountain House until open water in the spring, when furs, provisions and equipment were packed, the boats loaded and the post vacated for the summer. I had had six boats built, which with the two I had taken up made a considerable brigade. And so, the ice gone, we set forth one morning in the early spring with our first season's returns downstream for Edmonton. We had secured in trade twenty-five hundred buffalo robes, some tons of dried meat and grease, more than three hundred buffalo tongues, which we had salted and smoked, and six hundred wolf skins, besides other furs.

The horses, numbering about two hundred, taken principally in trade during the winter, were sent overland.

In travelling we never camped twice consecutively on the same side of the river, and preferred, when possible, an island, as a precaution against a sudden raid from some strong war party, a thing likely enough to occur then at any time. In due course we arrived safely at our headquarter post.

Living as we did among so many warlike tribes who knew no law except their own elemental passions or the rule of the Hudson's Bay Company's officers, it is surprising that the posts were not raided time and again. We were always in expectation of it, but this only added spice to the life. So long as they respected our posts as neutral ground and obeyed us as masters we never interfered with their customs or in their tribal wars. When travelling on the prairie we were liable at any time to fall in with

war parties and be despoiled of our horses and guns, in which event of course blood would have been spilt. Many such quarrels would have brought about a state of affairs similar to that existing on the American side, where fighting between whites and Indians was continual. But, strange to say, these encounters were few and far between.

XII

I TAKE CHARGE OF JASPER HOUSE

The Blackfeet and their allies, the Bloods, Peigans and Sarcees, had some customs not shared by other tribes of the Saskatchewan which were peculiar and interesting.

One was to create a father, brother or son from among us by the following simple method: The Indian who desired to form such a connection first notified the person selected of his wish. If this person were willing the Blackfoot appeared before him in full war dress, which comprised leather shirt fringed heavily with human hair and strips of ermine and leather, beaded and fringed leggings, beaded moccasins and feather headdress.

Divesting himself of this costume he offered it to his prospective relative, who was required to give in exchange all the raiment he then wore. The pipe of peace was next solemnly smoked and the ceremony was complete, the relationship effected. From that moment the warrior might be depended upon against all other Indians. I had personally a " brother " among the Blood Indians, another among the Blackfeet and a son among the Sarcees.

On one occasion my Blood brother brought in for my acceptance a splendid American horse which he had stolen south of the boundary. As I was absent from the post at the time he kept the horse for me until we met two years later, when he presented it to me, and I gave it back to him. Meantime no one had been allowed to mount him.

One of my " brothers " was named Nahtoose, the other Makwest-Mahkwan. Arrangements of this kind were made only with well-known chiefs. Both my " brothers " were subsequently killed by the Crees.

At this time the country of the Northwest was considered a vast desert, and with the exception of a small tract round Red River Settlement good only for buffalo and Indians. A few vegetables were grown at Carlton, Fort Pitt and Edmonton, but even this was discouraged, and had any employee of the Hudson's Bay Company ventured to express an opinion that the territory was fitted for settlement he would have found himself transported to the Arctic region. At The Pas, on the Saskatchewan, at Lac la Biche and Lac Ste. Anne the missionaries had gardens in which they grew all the vegetables they needed, but as these cultivated spots were not within the prairie territory they were regarded as exceptional localities that by chance had good soil.

The prairie in my early days commenced about three miles from Fort a la Corne, and land now covered by large poplar as far as Duck Lake was then all open prairie, with wood only along the large lakes and rivers. From Red River Settlement to the

PRIMITIVE TRANSPORTATION.

Rockies—all open prairie—not a single settler dwelt outside the Company's posts, the sole exceptions being a few halfbreeds round the missions at Lac la Biche and Lac Ste. Anne.

We found ourselves at Edmonton ahead of the outfits from Lesser Slave Lake and Jasper House, though both arrived next day. When the boats were all gathered and ready they set out again en route for York Factory and the long river-journey to salt water on Hudson Bay. I, however, was appointed to the charge of Jasper House, or rather a summer hunting party at that post, as the valley in which it was situated was almost completely flooded each spring and until late July or August. This flooding was caused by a river from the north and another from the south flowing into the Athabasca just above the mouth of the Mountain Pass, which is somewhat narrow and acts as a dam for the freshets, storing the spring water till mid-summer.

After a few days spent at Edmonton when the brigade had gone, I started with seven men, who had come from Jasper House to take the boat back, and my interpreter, a halfbreed from Oxford House. We took with us twenty-five or thirty ponies, to ride and carry supplies. To Fort Assiniboine we used the horses and from this point travelled by boat. The track to the crossing of the Pembina was good, but thereafter we encountered swamps, fallen trees and mosquitoes, the latter in myriads and all hungry. Six days were consumed in reaching Assiniboine, where we found the boat

in readiness. After a short delay we embarked upstream for Jasper House.

Being in no hurry we enjoyed good shooting on the way. Wild geese nested everywhere among the frequent sandbars and islands. Occasionally one of the crews—all Iroquois halfbreeds and capital hunters—set off early in the morning ahead of the boats. When they succeeded in killing a moose we stopped to have the carcase carried down to the boat and were thus provided with fresh meat throughout the trip.

In due time we arrived at Lac Brule, just below the entrance to the pass; this is simply a bulge in the river a few hundred yards in width. Here we found all the Iroquois encamped, with the hunters, meat-haulers and horse-keepers we had engaged. We were now at the actual foot of the Rockies.

After receiving supplies of tobacco and ammunition from our stores the Iroquois "pitched off" in various directions, while I remained a few days preparing saddles and tents. And here I enjoyed my first taste of the Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep, which were in flocks on the mountains in the vicinity. I think no meat can compare with that of a three-year-old ewe of this species when in season.

The Hudson's Bay Company kept some three hundred and fifty mares, separated into bands, in the valley along the pass as far as the forks of the river, where one branch flows to the Fraser and the other to the Columbia.

We commenced our hunting along the foothills, and as hunting in the locality had been followed for

years we had good roads, or "pitching trails" as they were called, for the reason that whole camps travelled them and pitched at accustomed intervals where feed for the horses was plentiful. Sometimes we made only a few miles, sometimes a fairly long move, remaining two or three weeks at each camp, until the vicinity was hunted out and the meat dried and cached.

At length we reached the head waters of the Smoky River, and after hunting this ground sufficient dry provisions were secured and we pitched back again over almost the same road. Our outfit consisted of four hunters and four meat-haulers with their respective families, my horse-keeper and his family, myself, a cook and an interpreter—in all ten lodges—with some hundred and fifty horses. The lodges were of dressed mooseskin, eight or ten to a tent, and were extremely comfortable.

We killed more than seventy moose on the trip, besides many bighorn, caribou and mountain goats.

I had often accompanied one of the hunters to learn how to hunt moose, but although I had started a number had never shot one. One day, however, as I was riding ahead of the party I saw a moose approaching down the bed of a creek. I hid my horse in some bushes and took a position behind a large rock. When the moose—a cow with her well-grown calf—had come within twenty yards I shot both, a feat over which I felt rather unreasonably proud when the others came up.

We found on arriving at the pass that the water had subsided, so went on to the post, and thence

sent men with horses to bring in the various caches of dried provisions we had left behind. It was now nearly September, so engaging a boat crew I returned to Fort Assiniboine and from there on horseback to Edmonton.

The country about the foothills where we hunted was heavily timbered, mainly with spruce, tamarac and poplar. On the first range of mountains and in the valleys between it and the second range the country was largely prairie, and our surefooted ponies could carry us almost anywhere. Bighorn and caribou were almost always in sight, though not necessarily always to be stalked. Streams and rivers were stocked with mountain, silver and speckled trout. Wild ducks abounded on the lakes, and wherever there was water there you would find beaver. One small lake ten miles north of the Mountain House, on the tip of a mountain, with neither inlet nor outlet, swarmed with trout. One had only to drop a hook when dozens would jump for it. They weighed three-quarters to a pound and a half.

There is a valley on the upper Smoky full of warm springs and covered with luxuriant grass. Snow never lies to any depth on the rich soil. At no distant day this spot doubtless will be a favourite resort and, if I am any prophet, a veritable garden. I have a theory that coal beds have been smouldering beneath it for ages, and that the smoke issuing from the banks of the Smoky and to which it owes its name, comes from fissures in the earth. The scenery all about is magnificent.

On the way down the river we saw an exciting chase between a large timber wolf and a caribou. The hill, long and sloping, had been burned over, leaving it quite clear from the top to the water, a quarter of a mile below.

The caribou, a fine buck, came first in sight, followed closely by the wolf. As they neared the river we thought the deer would make the water first, but about fifteen yards from the bank the wolf spurted, closed with the buck and fastened his teeth in the sinews of the hind leg. The deer was hamstrung at once and tumbled to the earth.

We were waiting quietly at the edge of the water, and the wolf was scarcely on his feet when our bullets struck him. He drove the game to the river—we bagged it.

XIII

WILD LIFE OF THE ATHABASCA

The Athabasca River, from Jasper House as far as Fort Assiniboine post, is very shallow at low water, with numerous rapids, none however of considerable size. They may all be safely run by boats or canoes, and at the high-water stage the stream is navigable for large boats. A flat-bottomed steamer might run from Fort Assiniboine to the foot of the Rocky Mountains.

Thick woods border the river on both sides, with some good timber on the flats and banks—high below the mountains but which grow gradually lower as the river descends. The numerous islands are also well-timbered. No doubt parts, if cleared, might be cultivated to advantage. At Fort Assiniboine the common garden vegetables, such as potatoes, turnips, cabbages, carrots, parsnips and beets, were successfully grown. As has been mentioned, it was well understood among both officers and servants of the Company that they were employed solely in the interests of the fur trade and not as agricultural agents or mining experts, and when we observed fine vegetables raised on a few spots by the

missionaries we knew they were to be regarded simply as small " oases " in a vast desert in which, by great care and a wonderful dispensation of Providence, such cultivation was made possible. The rest of the country was to be considered as fit only for furs, Indians and buffalo. But since the great railways have been pushed across it to the Rockies that fiction no longer obtains.

The returns of the fort comprised all kinds of valuable furs—silver, black, cross and red foxes, beaver, lynx, marten, mink, fisher, otter, bear (black, brown and grizzly), dressed moose and caribou skins. The expenses were very small, the personnel necessary to carry on the post consisting only of an interpreter at thirty and another man at seventeen pounds sterling per annum.

At Edmonton we enjoyed a short holiday, horse-racing and shooting birds. A party was organized to procure fresh buffalo meat. We set out with fifteen carts and twenty-five men and reached the buffalo a short way beyond the Beaver Hills. Loading our carts occupied a couple of days, and when we returned to Edmonton we learned that the brigade was on its way up. A few of us took horses and met the boats a little below the present site of Fort Saskatchewan, toiling up the river. We relinquished the horses to some friends wearied of the voyage and took their places, read our letters and newspapers and acquainted ourselves with what had been going on " outside " since February, when the last packet had reached Edmonton.

The cargoes having been unloaded and stored, the

head guide came for the grand "regale," or feast, which consisted of a quart of rum for the steersman, a pint for the bowsman and half a pint for each of the others. At nightfall the chief factor gave a dance at his big house, with an occasional libation to maintain the fun. There were no lack of fiddlers, most of the French halfbreeds playing the violin, so we had one of the old-time dances. People of every sort in the North—white, red and mixed, including full-painted squaws—took part. Eight- and four-hand reels and single and double jigs were the favourites, with occasional "interludes" when disputes arose and the disputants retired to settle them with their fists. These affairs adjusted, the combatants shook hands and the dance continued and was kept up until sunrise next morning.

As our unmarried voyageurs were flush with silk and cotton handkerchiefs, gaudy prints, necklaces and beads, many weddings were arranged during the evening with the belles of the ball. Next day, if found advisable, the chief factor was required to ratify these marriages; if he did not there was an end to them, as in that event no rations would be allowed for the woman or her children, nor would she be afforded transportation from one post to another.

Often, among the French Canadians and halfbreeds, exchange of wives was effected, either "at par" or else one side received "something to boot." These exchanges might be irrevocable or for stated periods and were considered quite proper; at any rate the ladies, to judge from their quiet

acquiescence, felt no delicacy about the arrangement.

With so many brides, in a day or so things took on a holiday aspect. With bright silk or cotton handkerchief or ribbons on the head, striped red or green blanket belted round the waist for gown, hair neatly braided and well plastered with pomatum and bear's grease, hands and face washed—bathing being generally out of fashion—dusky cheeks touched up with vermilion, gay young women were to be seen promenading in groups in every direction. The young men, in full dress, beaded leggings, fine-cloth capotes, fancy belts, cloth caps glorious with feathers and ribbons, strutted about, showing themselves off like so many wild turkey-cocks.

After two days of rest the regular work of the service recommenced. The servants for each post were selected and placed under their respective officers. The outfits were made up by the officers and men of Edmonton, and as fast as the officer in charge of an outpost received his goods he set his men to packing. Each package weighed ninety pounds and was arranged so far as possible to fit on either side of a pack saddle. When the goods were packed and provisions for the trip laid out the number of horses required for the post was determined and ordered in from the horse guards, two of which, containing between them eight or nine hundred horses, were maintained. At this time of year one of these guards was kept across the Sturgeon River where St. Alban's Mission now stands, the other about Lac la Nonne or Lac Breland.

The horses arriving, they were saddled and loaded, and, a stirrup-cup disposed of, the party started on its way. Jasper House post, being most distant, that command left first, in charge of Andre Cardinal, accompanied by a clerk who had arrived during the winter with the packet from Victoria, B.C., and desired to return to Jasper House in readiness to catch the spring boat for his trip back to the coast.

The next to leave was that for Lesser Slave Lake, in charge of Colin Fraser, and that for Fort Assiniboine under a postmaster named Kininawsis. The following day the boat for the Mountain House was loaded and started in charge of Mr. Brazeau, an old and experienced clerk who had acquired an intimate knowledge of the Blackfeet nations at Yellowstone and Fort Benton on the Missouri.

After the various brigades had left for their respective stations in the lonely wilderness we settled down for the winter at Edmonton, with Chief Factor William Sinclair in charge of the district, James McKenzie as clerk and accountant, John Sinclair and myself as clerks, and William Calder and William Munro as interpreters. We had, besides, sixty-five regular servants, including boat-builders, carpenters and blacksmiths, and about fifty temporary servants—hunters, horse-keepers, meat-haulers and fishermen. These formed the regular staff for Edmonton.

Michael Calihous, the head fisherman, with two other men, was sent to Lac Ste. Anne with orders to "hang up" thirty-six thousand whitefish for the use of the dogs, and rations at the post when

necessary. The fish were netted, cleaned, split and suspended in the air from poles to dry. They may thus be kept all winter.

Another party was sent out with pack horses to bring in fresh buffalo meat for immediate use. Just before winter set in a band of about forty lodges of Sarcees came to the post. They brought provisions, robes and leather, obtained their supplies and left next evening.

The Sarcees, although they have existed independently for over a century, are really a branch of the Beaver tribe of Peace River, and even now a Sarcee and a Beaver understand each other's speech. It appears that about one hundred and forty years ago the Beaver Indians hunted, some on the north, others on the south side of Peace River, and in the spring were accustomed to meet at the mouth of the Red River, fifty miles below Fort Vermilion. On one occasion a quarrel arose between the two chiefs over a gambling bout. Blood was spilled, and the younger chief left with his band and joined the Blackfeet, with whom they have remained ever since, though in a distinct band.

The Blackfeet themselves formerly lived north of the Saskatchewan, between Edmonton and Lesser Slave Lake, and were Woods Indians. They possessed no horses. The plains were overrun by the Pawnee nation, at that time one of the most powerful and warlike tribes, constantly fighting all other nations. War and disease had, however, depleted their numbers, and the remnant had been pushed farther south.

Meanwhile the Blackfeet had grown strong, and having by theft obtained horses, gradually advanced into the prairie country until they ultimately settled between the Missouri and the Saskatchewan, where they remain to this day. The small remnant of the Pawnees is, I believe, on a reserve in Florida.

For the next month we were kept busy outfitting small bands of Woods Indians and getting them off to their winter hunts. The halfbreeds from Lac Ste. Anne came in with nearly a hundred and fifty horses and dog-sleds. As soon as there was sufficient snow they made their way out to the plains to prepare dried provisions for their winter use and to trade for winter necessaries.

XIV

THE WINTER OF 1855-6

So passed the time until nearly Christmas, when the officers from Fort Pitt, Lac la Biche, Lesser Slave Lake and Fort Assiniboine began to arrive with their dog-trains, the harness gay with silk or bead-work, embroidered saddle-cloths, silver bells and feathers. The drivers, too, were rigged *en voyageur*, with beads and silkwork ornate and resplendent. Challenges as to which dogs were swiftest and most enduring came from all sides and were promptly accepted. From morning until night races were soon the order of the day, enthusiasm kept at high pitch by frequent adjournments to decanters and secreted flasks. At night dancing cheated sleep. In fact, Fort Edmonton from Christmas until New Year was the scene of a continued round of revelry. At midnight as the old year expired every hand that could raise an old flintlock fired salutes to the new one until the powder-horns were drained.

The old three-pound metal carronades were not always fired, owing to an accident three years before. The blacksmith had gone into a bastion, loaded one of these guns and discharged it. No

attention was at the time paid to the sound, but when next morning the man was missed and a search instituted his dead body was found in the bastion. He had been killed by the bursting of the old cannon.

New Year was the glorious festival of the year, a day given up to handshaking, kissing and sport. Few of the women thought of putting out their hands to shake, but held up their cheeks in the old French fashion. All employees got a regale and thoroughly enjoyed themselves, the fun including not infrequent challenges to combat, the damage in which was limited to a few black eyes and bloody noses.

In the evening the chief factor gave a dance in the big house, the belle of the ball being a Blackfoot woman who had been left in the fall to the care of his wife, Mrs. William Sinclair. She was tall and very fair, with a splendid figure, and wore a gown loaned for the occasion by our chief's daughter. She probably was the offspring of some unfortunate white woman, captured and brought up by the Indians.

Quite a number of women among the Indians who came to the trading posts in those days had no sign of a drop of Indian blood. Their hair was light, they had blue eyes and good figures and, except for sunburn, were as fair as any white woman. For this there was explanation: When the Indians raided an immigrant train on the American side they killed all grown people and boys but preserved the female children, who grew up perfect Indians in their

THE DOG TRAIN

ways. Rarely could they be persuaded to leave their Indian friends.

A day or two after New Year the various officers left for their posts. To watch them set off with their dogs was a brave sight. Each officer had his "carriole," a sled of birch boards, twelve feet long, the sides covered with parchment skins and handsomely painted. Four dogs went to a sled. The officer was comfortably wrapped in buffalo robes. A man, it might be, ran ahead on snowshoes to break the trail, another behind to drive the dogs and see that the carriole did not upset. It was the cosiest mode of winter travelling imaginable. Thirty-five to forty miles was considered an average day's run, though, with a good road and fit men and dogs, sixty to seventy miles was not uncommon. Three a.m. was starting time, with a stop for breakfast at eight and another at midday for dinner. Camp was made at sunset.

After the last of these trains had departed a brigade of sixty horse-sleds and thirty dog-trains was sent to the Beaver Hills to haul in three hundred buffalo cows previously killed and staged out of the reach of predatory animals. The horse-sleds were of birch boards, fourteen inches wide and fourteen feet long. Each sled was fitted with shafts and drawn by a single horse. The meat of two cows formed a load, and one man was expected to manage four sleds, travelling eighteen to twenty miles a day.

The dog-train loads were 450 to 550 pounds, according to the capacity of the team. When

horses and dogs travelled in company the dogs had an easy time.

While buffalo were usually slaughtered by hunters on horseback, by far the greater number were killed in the *petah-kehan*, a corral built on a bluff and fenced nine or ten feet high with poplar poles. This corral was circular, with a post in the centre. A gateway twelve feet or so in width was left open, and to the centre post were attached all the medicine man's bags and charms. From the gate for a good way out the Indians lay hidden, disposed in the shape of a V. For a quarter of a mile from the gate a double line of small sticks set in the ground and capped by buffalo chips formed a gradually-widening lane that at the end was four or five hundred yards broad. The buffalo were led into this lane by an Indian who rode ahead of the herd, waving a buffalo robe and sounding a peculiar call. They were thus decoyed at times more than twenty miles.

When well within the V the Indians, shouting and waving their robes, arose. This made the terrified animals close up and press forward. When they arrived at the gate of the corral the Indian leading them suddenly turned his horse aside and the buffalo immediately rushed in, up went the gate and the whole herd was impounded. Then began the slaughter. Men and women lined the top of the fence and the wild cattle were dispatched to the last one. Whether they numbered fifty or five hundred was immaterial; the Indians feared that should one escape it would inform those outside and none could again be caught in the same way.

Poundmaker, or Petah-kehan Apeeweean, the Cree chief prominently connected with the Rebellion of 1885, was named for his skill in the construction of the *petah-kehan*.

It was stated as a curious fact that the buffalo always ran round the corral in the direction of the sun's course and were never known to take any other. I believe that if by chance they had at any time gone the opposite way the Indians would have been too frightened to kill them.

When the last beast had been killed the women commenced to cut up the meat, cooking and devouring the choice portions, drying the remainder and making grease. Thus they worked and feasted for several days, until little more than half the meat remained. They then "pitched" for a few miles and the process was repeated.

Another way in which hundreds of buffalo were annually sacrificed was in their attempts to cross the rivers and small lakes before the ice was strong enough to support them, or after the sun had rotted it in the spring. At times a whole herd was thus drowned. Should any portion of the struggling mass reach the shore the Indians viewing the spectacle with their rifles completed the herd's destruction. Buffalo were then so numerous it was never dreamed that they could be exterminated in the course of a few years, though at the time of which I write it began to be perceived that they were not so plentiful as formerly.

We passed the remainder of the winter of 1855-6 visiting the Roman Catholic mission at Lac Ste.

Anne, where we always met with the kindest reception from the Reverend Father Lacombe, who was in charge. Father Lacombe died, honoured by all Canada, but a few years ago. We also made a few more trips after buffalo and enjoyed some sport with the prairie chickens.

Early in the spring began the packing of robes and other furs, pemmican-making and the baling of dried meat and buffalo tongues which had been salted and smoked. We got the boats in order and occupied the time in various ways till the brigades arrived from Lesser Slave Lake, Fort Assiniboine, Jasper House and Mountain House, bringing their winter trade, which in a few days was ready to ship by water. The brigades then left on their long journey to York Factory on Hudson Bay. All officers in charge of the various posts had now gone for the summer, and so ended the only winter of the many I have seen with the Hudson's Bay Company in which I served under another man. The remainder of my service was either in charge of a post, a brigade or a district. To rise from apprentice clerk to commissioned officer after but one winter under a superior was a rare distinction.

I was now appointed to take charge of Lac la Biche, with instructions to first carry to Fort Dunvegan on the Peace River the men engaged for British Columbia, together with sundry bags of buffalo grease and leather for the same place. These goods were intended for trade with the Indians of British Columbia, who would pay for them in marten skins almost any price asked.

XV

FORT EDMONTON IN THE 'FIFTIES

BEFORE passing on to the recounting of my personal experiences in other fields of work at the close of my only term of service with the Hudson's Bay Company in a subordinate capacity, I may pause long enough to describe briefly some of the most interesting features of the fur trade as conducted almost three-fourths of a century ago at the chief post of the old organization on the Saskatchewan.

After 9 o'clock in the morning the Indians, a limited number at a time, were admitted to the Indian room. This was reached through a narrow palisaded passage from the small gate in the stockade surrounding the fort. No liquor could at this time be bought for consumption on the premises, though those desiring it might purchase kegs to be carried away with them. The rule that these kegs must not be broached except in camp was never violated. There, the purchasers often traded with the others.

Besides liquor, their purchases in those days were limited almost entirely to ammunition, guns, tobacco and vermilion in small buckskin bags. The latter was often mixed with flour—one of paint to five

of flour. The liquor, Jamaica rum, was first mixed in the ratio of one part rum and seven water. As the trade progressed it was diluted more and more until little was left but the smell.

When they first appeared at the fort, the chiefs were met at the main gate by the officer in charge. As the hands of the head chief and the Hudson's Bay Company official joined, the flag of the old organization rose to the peak of the mast in the square and the cannon in one of the bastions boomed. This formal proceeding was repeated until each chief had been regularly received. There was but one cannon and a single flag, so that, as may be imagined, this entailed some delay. The first chief having been duly recognized, the others in order of precedence were obliged to wait while the flag was lowered and the big gun recharged. Then they, too, were accorded in turn the honours of a formal reception.

The Company carried in stock in those days a quantity of military coats, adorned with gilt braid and buttons, of the period of Henry VIII. A Henry VIII. coat cost a good horse. The chief's most soaring ambition was the possession of a complete uniform, which included the coat, an elaborately-embroidered, very long and low vest and red military trousers with gold stripes down the sides. The uniform was surmounted by a high beaver hat with an immense plume, a fox tail, in front. Decked out in this costume the chief was an exalted personage.

Once the trade began he was not likely to long retain his coveted garb intact. The trousers went first, next the vest and then the coat. Ultimately

he would strut about wearing only his breechclout, the deference-compelling hat and his moccasins. The last thing parted with was certain to be the hat. Sometimes, in a moment of drunken absentmindedness, the breechclout slipped behind, and the haughty head of his clan paraded about the camp sans clothing save for the hat and the trailing breechclout.

At 9 a.m. sharp a rum trade came to an abrupt stop; no liquor was obtainable after that hour at any price.

Indians arriving to trade filed silently past the fort on the way to their camp-ground nearby. The lodges were pitched; then the chiefs, several sometimes simultaneously, came with their bands and were admitted to the Indian room. Each took up his position with his young men on a separate bench. No word was spoken until the interpreter had filled the long-stemmed pipe with tobacco and *harouge*, or red-willow bark.

The master, which in the case of a headquarter post like Edmonton meant the chief factor, had in the meantime entered. The interpreter having lit the pipe, it was passed to the head chief. Each chief had a different way of receiving it. He would rise, take the pipe, present it to the north, west, south and east; then to the sun ("Going to the sun"). These formalities having been observed, he took three long whiffs and passed it to the man next him on the left. The pipe then travelled on down the line, each man taking three puffs and no more.

If the pipe was not presented according to his own

particular form a chief would not accept it. Piskun Munro, the halfbreed interpreter at Fort Edmonton in those days, knew all the prescribed rites of the various chiefs ; thus no mistakes were made and no trouble arose.

Before the speeches began each Indian was given a drink. The head chief then rose and made his talk, asking the master to pity and favour them, proclaiming that they had done their best and would try to do better in the future. The master followed, saying he was well pleased that they had striven to make good hunts and had no doubt, as they had said, that their next visit would prove even more satisfactory. The speeches ended, each Indian received another drink and they were turned out of the fort. All gates were closed. The trade, meaning the barter in rum, then began and might be kept up all night and until nine next morning, when it ceased summarily.

A small blockhouse stood against the stockade in front. The trade was carried on through a wooden shutter some eighteen inches square set in the stockade inside the blockhouse. Through this the Indian handed in his robes, furs and other barterable effects and received his portion of weak Jamaica rum. Instead of a robe sometimes a bullet intended for the trader passed through the opening into the blockhouse. The redman celebrating was not usually an amiable individual. While a liquor trade was in progress the fort was closed tight ; every door and gate in the stockade firmly locked and secured, and no Indian was admitted within the walls of the fort.

When the Indians crossed the Saskatchewan or any other river in those days they had to swim. The women usually crossed first; then the horses were driven in by the men, and it was the women's job to catch the animals as they reached the opposite shore. This did not always give them time to dress, and in *puris naturalibus* the horses were captured and then gowns were donned.

XVI

THE TRIP TO DUNVEGAN

To resume my story: Having driven in a herd of horses from the guard and arranged the saddles and pieces, we left for Fort Assiniboine, whence we took boat for Lesser Slave Lake. As, besides my own six, I had sixteen men for British Columbia, we were furnished with double crews and made remarkably quick time on the river; indeed, the boat never stopped except at meal time. From Fort Assiniboine we proceeded by boat down the Athabasca River to the mouth of Lesser Slave Lake River and across Lesser Slave Lake to the northwest end, where stood the Hudson's Bay Company's post. On the way down we saw several bears and moose but were too pressed for time to hunt them. The only game we killed was five jumping deer we sighted crossing the river, and shot as they climbed the bank.

On enquiring at the post about the horses I found that five only were saddle-broken, the remaining thirty-five or forty mares and young animals never having been handled. Our first task, therefore, was to find and drive them into a corral. Next morning we had to catch, saddle and load them; then, all

being ready, a start was made. It was great sport. Some bucked, some bolted in one direction, some in another, but fortunately, with the exception of four new hands from the Orkneys, my men were well up in this work, so that it did not bother them.

I gave the new men charge of the old stallion and two good lines with which to hold him, while with one man I remained behind for a couple of hours to pick up any animals that might wander back. When at last I did start the first thing I met was the stallion, minus his load and guardians, the new Orkney hands. As the lines were still attached we succeeded in capturing him. He was greatly excited over the loss of his harem. A mile farther on we met the new men. They could tell us nothing as to the load; the last they had seen of their charge he was disappearing, load and all, in the woods as fast as he could gallop. By following his track we discovered his pack where he had scraped it off between two trees.

We made perhaps four miles that day, and night was coming when we had collected all the horses and loads, but we had broken in the beasts and they were thoroughly tired. Next day, being more accustomed to their burdens, they gave us little trouble. I had some of the old mares taken ahead, and then, appointing him head driver, I turned the stallion loose. He took good care that none lagged behind.

We made twenty-five miles that day, and thereafter our troubles were slight until we arrived at the

mouth of the Smoky, where a boat waited to take us to Dunvegan, fifty or sixty miles upstream. Leaving two men to look after the horses, with instructions to saddle up when they heard two shots above, we embarked.

Our steersman was an experienced guide, to whom every stone and rapid on the Peace River was an old acquaintance. We reached a point where a long island lay ahead. The guide informed me that the north channel would considerably shorten our route ; no boat, however, could run it at that stage of water. The channel appeared to me to have plenty of depth, so, much to the old guide's disgust, I as temporary steersman turned the boat in and away we sped, the guide warning me every now and then that we were losing hours by not listening to an old man's advice. When we reached the head of the channel we were faced by a bar fifty yards broad with water trickling over it scarcely six inches wide and not an inch deep. I steered the boat to shore and relinquished the steering oar to the old man. He expected to have to steer the boat all the way back, but to his astonishment I ordered my men to jump out and portage the whole outfit across, which with the large number in our party we were enabled to do without a stop, and we reached Dunvegan next day without further adventure. The old guide said never a word until we landed, when he was overheard remarking to the clerk in charge :

" Take care that you say nothing to that crowd or they will pull the fort down ; they are a band of *diables*, and their clerk is the worst ! "

My stay at Dunvegan was short. After having something to eat I took a large birch-bark canoe and started immediately downstream, paddling all night. When within hearing distance of the spot where our horses had been left, according to arrangement I fired two shots as a signal to my men to have them ready. Leaving the canoe we mounted at once and rode hard all day, camping well on our road, and arrived at Lesser Slave Lake next evening. Lesser Slave Lake being one of the finest sheets of water for that sport in the country we remained for two days' duck-shooting. It may be imagined how plentiful were the birds when I mention that I shot forty-two mallards one morning before breakfast.

In due time we left on our return to Edmonton, the trip being a repetition of all similar ones, though at one stage we enjoyed a little extra sport. We had put ashore a short distance below a small island with a fine beach and a few willows in the centre.

A black bear was crossing to the island from the opposite shore, and all, except two Indians and myself, ran some distance up the beach to wait for the bear, taking my gun with them. I asked the Indians left with me if they had a gun. On one of them producing a flintlock and some powder, I found two bullets and proposed that we cross to the island and have first shot at the bear.

One Indian carrying the gun and the other the powderhorn and remaining bullet, we crossed. As we reached the edge of the willows out came the bear, and the Indian fired, inflicting a nasty wound. The bear immediately rushed for the hunter, who

ran for the boat but had no time to board. I was sitting in the bow with my revolver but would not fire; the race was too entertaining. I cried to the Indian to keep on round the island and to lose no time—the bear was close at his heels. He was a noted runner, but I believe on this occasion he broke all records. He had dropped his gun. His companion, picking it up, loaded and lay down behind some driftwood. When the bear, now only five or six feet behind the sprinter, came opposite, he shot him.

This was one of the best footraces I ever witnessed. Another occurred at Edmonton.

A band of Blackfeet were camped on the hill above the fort when one of their bucks, a finely-built young fellow of about twenty, killed a companion. He made off instantly, followed by a dozen Indians sending arrows and bullets all about him, until he reached the flat below the fort, when he had gained so much on his pursuers as to be out of range. He was quite naked barring his breechclout; his feet seemed scarcely to touch the earth, and the speed with which he put danger behind him would have opened the eyes of a Longboat, famous as an Indian runner though that more modern champion may have been.

Landing at Fort Assiniboine we rode across to Edmonton. Perhaps twelve miles from the crossing of the Sturgeon River we stumbled upon three buffalo, which we ran with our horses and added to the trophies of the trip.

XVII

ROUTINE OF A HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY POST

I REMAINED a few days at Edmonton before leaving for my new appointment at Lac la Biche. We first crossed the river and took the road by the Beaver Hills as far as the Butte Noir, where at the Snake Hills we re-crossed and followed the trail past Good Fish and Whitefish Lakes and the Beaver River to Lac la Biche post.

Except for a few bluffs of poplar the country was almost all prairie as far as Good Fish Lake, from there to Whitefish less open, and thence on we travelled through woods all the way to Lac la Biche, though in spots about the Beaver River it had been burned over.

Lac la Biche had, for the time of which I write, quite a large settlement. On the east side was the Hudson's Bay Company post, and less than a quarter of a mile away the English church mission under the Rev. Henry Steinheur. A little farther on were five houses occupied by halfbreeds and free-traders, and on the south side, about two miles beyond, lay the group of buildings comprising the Roman Catholic mission under the Rev. Father Maissoneuve. Here again were several houses occupied by halfbreeds.

The land and gardens about these places showed that vegetables of all kinds could be grown to perfection. The lake itself abounded in whitefish.

At the post the allowance of provisions for the winter was on the following scale : To a chief factor, 300 pounds of flour, 336 pounds of sugar, 18 pounds of black tea, nine pounds of green tea, 42 pounds of raisins, 60 pounds of butter, 30 pounds of candles, three pounds of mustard and 16 gallons of port, sherry and brandy or shrub. These provisions were put in two-gallon kegs, four of which were lashed together and called a maccaron. Rice, pepper and pimento were added, with 15 pounds of chocolate.

A chief trader received half the quantity, and a chief clerk half as much as a chief trader.

This was the winter allowance, but in addition the officer in charge of the brigade on the annual trip to York Factory, with the clerks who accompanied him, was made a voyage allowance. The chief factor's portion was one maccaron of biscuit, ham, tea, sugar, chocolate, salted tongues, butter and flour. The clerks got half a maccaron, and each man might take what he preferred of the four beverages.

The officer in charge of the district also got an extra allowance of flour, hams and drinkables, which was called " strangers' mess allowance," as he had to entertain many visitors. The best parts of the fresh meats were always reserved for the officers' mess, and the supply was *ad libitum*.

The postmasters were old and deserving servants, now exempted from boat and most other hard work,

but never placed in charge of important posts. Their wages were forty pounds sterling per annum, with an allowance for the season of 32 pounds of sugar, three pounds of black and one-and-a-half of green tea, seven pounds of rice, and a half-pound each of pepper and pimento.

The meat rations were weighed out each evening to the postmasters and servants of the prairie posts, eight pounds of fresh meat, two-and-a-half of pemmican, or three of dried meat, to each man. One whitefish was allowanced to each woman and a half to each child, if the fish were obtainable; otherwise the woman received half a man's allowance of meat and the child a quarter. Train dogs were fed two fish or four pounds of fresh meat daily.

A record of the provisions stocked, with their weight or quantities, was entered as received in the "Provision Book," in which were also entered the allowances as they were given out. Thus the officer in charge could see at a glance what provisions he had on hand at any time. Each post had also to keep a diary of the weather, work done, annual departures, births, deaths, marriages and all other events.

Some of these records were rather amusing. I noticed one which set out that on a certain day "the wind was northwest; a band of Indians camped round; all hands chopping cordwood," and that "Mrs. Bellerose was delivered of a fine girl." And for the next thirteen days the dates were duly written and the words perfunctorily added, "All the same as yesterday." So it would appear that the wood-chopping had included Sunday and that poor Mrs.

Bellerose had become the mother of fourteen children in as many days, which is rather hard to credit.

I stayed a month or two at my post to get the run of the place, and then decided to go to Fort Pitt to meet the boats with my outfit from York Factory. Taking one attendant I rode to Pitt, where I waited two weeks for the boats. We were much disappointed not to see the "old boss," Chief Factor William Sinclair, aboard the light-boat. It appeared that he had taken the place at Norway House of Chief Factor Thomas Swanston. The latter officer, when I first came in with Sir George Simpson, was in charge of Michipicoton, Lake Superior, and having thus served most of his time in a quiet southern department was quite unaccustomed to the Wild West ways of the prairie district and rather apprehensive both of his own men and of the Indians. In fact, in the spring the brigades had rebelled at Carlton and put him ashore, upon which he drove to Fort Garry and was appointed elsewhere.

When all was ready for my return to winter quarters we embarked and proceeded to the Snake Hills, where I had ordered forty horses with pack saddles to meet me. Here we landed my outfit, and in camp that evening our new chief officer enquired what my plans were. I replied that I would get the brigades ready as quickly as possible and send them off; I, however, intended to remain a day and put in the forenoon "drinking with the Indians." He informed me sternly that this would cost me the prospect of a trip the following spring to appear

before Sir George Simpson and the council. A record of this trip will appear in its place.

After the "drinking" was over, and I had traded a large quantity of dried provisions and a few horses, we loaded up and caught the first brigade a day before we reached Lac la Biche. When we got in we found a number of Woods Indians and halfbreed hunters waiting to get their supplies before starting on their winter hunt. Supplies were given on credit, but we could trust almost all our debtors—some good hunters to the extent of 800 made-beaver—with practical certainty of receiving payment. Nowadays, however, if you trust the enlightened Indian with fifty cents you stand a good chance of losing that sum.

XVIII

SIR GEORGE CALLS ME ON THE CARPET

By the time the hunters had left for their camps Fall was upon us. We had now to lay in the winter supply of whitefish for the women, children and dogs. Nine or ten thousand was considered a sufficient quantity. Most of these we speared from a bar between an island and a point on the mainland. The water was three to four feet deep. The fish were spawning and so numerous that the lake bottom was scarcely visible. It was a matter merely of sending down the spear and bringing it up with one or two, and sometimes three, fish at a time.

The run commenced about dusk and finished round midnight, when, the fish growing scarce, we left off spearing. We used birchbark flambeaux for torches, and seldom secured less than a thousand each calm night during the whole spawning period. At other points on the lake where the fish were less plentiful the nets were kept going, so that before the freeze-up we had all we required. The missionaries and halfbreeds were all carrying on the same work of putting up their winter stock of fish.

On my first going out an opposition trader, an old

clerk of the Company who had left the service and was accustomed to spearing, thinking me a novice at the work, planned what he anticipated would turn out a huge joke on me. He challenged me for the night. We were to take an equal number of birch-bark torches, land our canoes to unload thrice only, and the one with most fish at the end was to take the united catch. He was unaware that some years before I had had experience at spearing fish on Lake Simcoe, Ontario. So when the fish were counted in the morning my opponent was greatly disgusted to find I had nearly two hundred more than he. The joke was on him. I had managed it thus :

When the last torch was almost burned out and the canoe almost full, I said to my man :

" Get into the water and hold the boat."

I followed him. The night was so dark that no one could see our movements, and I continued spearing until informed by my man that the canoe would hold no more. Each of us, then, seizing an end, waded with it to shore.

By the time everything was settled for the winter it had commenced to snow. The dog-trains, with which trips were made from camp to camp in every direction collecting furs and hauling moose and buffalo meat, were got in order, and I had the melancholy satisfaction and distinction of hunting what I believe was the last wood buffalo killed in that locality. These buffalo were different from those of the plains and at this time were quite numerous at many points. Their horns were larger, coats thicker, and as a rule the animals were bigger all

round. Most of them were killed off by hunters during a few winters of deep snow. The beasts were simply speared—in the main just for the excitement of the doubtful sport. A remnant still roams the wilderness reaching from Great Slave Lake to the Rockies. They numbered some years ago round 350 which the Canadian Government tried as far as possible to protect. Recently about 4000 of the prairie variety from the Wainwright Park have been placed upon the same range.

The winter of 1856-7 I passed at my post, though I made two trips south of the Saskatchewan in search of buffalo meat, and at Christmas ran in to Edmonton with my dogs, remaining until the day following New Year. I also paid occasional visits to the Indian camps. I was a good traveller, and having a splendid train of dogs, took even more pleasure in dog-driving than in hunting.

Spring came, and after packing the furs we left for the Snake Hills in time to meet the brigade from Edmonton. On its arrival next day an order from Sir George Simpson that I and one of his sons, another clerk, should come down to Norway House, was handed me. Accordingly I boarded one of the boats and proceeded to Fort Pitt, where the other clerk was in charge. From here, wondering much what the summons meant, we travelled on together.

The council was sitting when we arrived at Norway House, but as soon as it closed I was summoned to the private office of the great Governor. He looked up as I entered and told me to be seated.

"Young man," he said sharply, "what's this I hear

about your being in the habit of drinking with the Indians ? "

I flared up. " Sir George," I replied, " that is a lie. I should like to know the name of your informant."

" Chief Factor Swanston," he said at once. " He asserts that last Fall when you were leaving the Snake Hills with the outfit for Lac la Biche you yourself made the statement."

I could not repress a smile. " I believe I did make a statement, in the local parlance, that scandalized Mr. Swanston, who was new to the Saskatchewan country. A band of Crees, just returned from a buffalo hunt, was in camp at the hills. I thought it a good opportunity for a trade. Just before leaving Mr. Swanston asked me when I would start for my post. ' As soon as possible,' I told him, ' I shall send off the brigade. But as for myself, I will remain over for a day to drink—in other words, sir, trade—with the Indians.' "

Sir George laughed heartily, and that was the last I heard of the matter.

I was now directed to take charge of two boats going to Carlton. The crews belonged to Cumberland District and had been notoriously insubordinate during the two previous seasons ; in fact, the young clerk in charge had no control over them. Sir George told me to take a few of our " bullies " with me and give the troublesome crews a good lesson, but to be sure and render the cargoes at Carlton.

I accordingly set forth. As the men all hailed from The Pas I could take no disciplinary steps until

we reached Fort a la Corne, a safe distance above their homes. I had taken only one "bully," Jack Norris, a Scotchman, but a man who did not know fear and enjoyed a fight more than his dinner. We rode along the riverbank abreast of the brigade.

At la Corne I issued some orders I knew would bring out the anticipated defiance. The men promptly disobeyed and jumped ashore.

"You'll get no pay for this trip," I told them. "You're deserters, and won't be allowed aboard again."

There were seventeen or eighteen of them. They laughed derisively at my brave announcement. But their amusement ended abruptly. Jack Norris was among them like a flash, hitting right and left, and before they could realize what had happened half a dozen had felt the weight of his mighty fist on noses and eyes, while the rest were scuttling for cover. We landed the cargoes, and leaving the crews to find their way home as best they could mounted our horses and rode to Carlton, where I left orders that two crews be sent down for the boats and cargoes.

We procured fresh horses at Carlton and again at Fort Pitt, and rode through to Edmonton. The mutineers, too much impressed to meddle with the Company's property after we were gone, proved ever afterward the most obedient trippers (as voyageurs in my time were called) on the river.

It was in this year that the Earl of Southesk made his famous hunting trip through the Saskatchewan country to the Rockies, down the mountains south

of the North Saskatchewan and back again over the plains to Winnipeg, then known as Red River.

I had been told by Sir George to lose no time but keep ahead of his lordship's party and arrange for his reception at the various posts. It was a commission after my own heart. On reaching la Corne I found I was well in advance of the earl and could easily hold the lead, but being in somewhat of a characteristic hurry to reach Edmonton I took advantage of the governor's instructions to "lose no time," which gave me the right to choice of horses throughout the journey. I therefore selected five of the best animals in the herd at la Corne, two each for myself and Norris and one to carry our provisions and blankets, and thus equipped we left the fort at daylight, reaching Carlton the same evening.

Bridges or ferries being unknown in those days, when we came to the south branch of the Saskatchewan we stripped and swam the river with the horses. Before morning five fresh horses were ready, and next night found us at Jackfish Lake. Pitt was reached next evening, and, again with fresh horses, Butte Noir the night following. Old Man's Knoll was our stop our fifth night out, and early on the morning of the sixth day we entered Edmonton, having travelled a distance seldom covered on horseback in a like space of time. From Fort a la Corne to Edmonton is approximately 500 miles, and usually required ten days' steady riding. On this occasion, carrying the express ahead of the Earl of Southesk, we did the journey in five days and two hours, and had not our horses given out two hours short of

Edmonton, would have done it within the even five days.

From Edmonton, after a few days' rest, I saddled and rode to my post at Lac la Biche, where I remained until I thought it time to proceed to Fort Pitt to meet the brigade with the winter's goods from Hudson Bay.

XIX

OPENING THE JASPER TRAIL

After a day or two of waiting at Fort Pitt I decided to ride down to meet the boats. I took with me Louis Chastellain, a veteran who held the position of postmaster, and another halfbreed. Only when we had arrived within a few miles of the Battle River mouth did the brigade appear, bringing Chief Factor W. J. Christie, who had been appointed to the management of the district. He had been in charge of Swan River some years before, and was familiar with the eastern section of the prairie country. Our new chief decided to ride with us. My second man was ordered into a boat, while Mr. Christie mounted his horse, and we rode in company until camping time.

Next morning Mr. Christie again joined Chastellain and myself on the trail. Just before midday we sighted three buffalo bulls close to the edge of the riverbank, and the chief factor proposed that we shoot one. When sufficiently close I ordered Chastellain to push ahead and kill one of the bulls. He was almost upon them, when his horse, stepping in a badger hole, threw him. His head struck the

ground and he lay half-stunned where he fell. I therefore urged my horse forward and put a ball in one of the old bulls. He ran a few paces and turned at bay within thirty yards of the bank.

Mr. Christie earnestly desired us to drive the animal to the brink of the bank so that his wife might see him shoot it, but in spite of all we could do the bull stood his ground and we were obliged to dispatch him on the spot.

Owing to certain appointments made at Lac la Biche I now refused to return to that post. Jasper House two winters before had been in charge of one of our clerks. He was no hunter and had no authority with his men ; consequently he had almost starved at times. Due to his lack of success most of the horses had been removed to Edmonton in the summer, and when winter again set in the horse-keeper was sent to bring the remainder and to supply the Iroquois with ammunition, at the same time acquainting them with the fact that the post was being abandoned. Meanwhile, the Shushwaps had been going to the west side of the Rockies for their supplies, while the Jasper House Iroquois came to Lac Ste. Anne and Fort Assiniboine.

Having myself spent a summer at Jasper House I felt convinced that the Iroquois would return to that post if it were re-established. I therefore made an offer to return, which Mr. Christie was glad to accept. I communicated with the Iroquois, advising them to " pitch up," hunting in different directions, and when short of ammunition or other supplies to come to Jasper House. I then took some forty-odd

horses with an outfit and started for the post, accompanied by my cook, his wife, a French Canadian horse-keeper and six young Iroquois. The road as far as Lac Ste. Anne was good ; from there via Island Lake to the Pembina we followed an Indian " pitching trail." We reached the crossing at the Grand Rapids and thence took one of the old hunting trails to Lac Brule and Jasper House. At times swamps, muskegs and fallen timber limited our progress to less than five miles a day ; at other times we made twenty-five to thirty miles. No pack train had ever previously been taken up to Jasper House, and what was known as " The Old Jasper Trail " was opened by myself.

The early part of November had passed, and the snow was six inches deep when we got through, while half a bag of pemmican was all that was left of our provisions. The buildings, so long untenanted, badly needed repairing, the chinks between the logs re-mudding, the chimneys patching and the windows fitting with new parchment—glass in those days being unknown. These and sundry other similar jobs occupied some time.

The day after our arrival I sent five of the poorest horses in charge of two Iroquois to the valley of the upper Smoky River where feed was plentiful during the winter. Leaving the cook, horse-keeper and an Iroquois to put the place in order, with three other Iroquois and ten horses I went up the valley to a point where a small stream enters on the west side of Roche Jack, the first mountain on the left side of the Smoky looking upstream. We followed the stream

to the junction of four mountain spurs abounding with bighorn sheep, which were accustomed to seek the salt-licks below morning and evening.

We returned to camp late, but one of the Iroquois had killed a fat ewe, the meat of which after our protracted diet of dried provisions we greatly enjoyed. I should be ashamed to say how many roasts we cooked or how much mutton we consumed between night and morning.

Next day we got seven more bighorn, the carcases of which I sent to the post by two of my Iroquois, instructing them to spend a few days below Lac Brule and hunt moose. In the morning two more bighorn fell to our rifles, besides a goat, and we started on our return to Jasper House. At that time 28-calibre muzzle-loading smoothbore guns were our only weapons and we could kill at no great distance. Hundreds of sheep were continually in sight, and had we possessed rifles such as are in use to-day we should have killed enough to supply us with meat throughout the winter.

Three days after our arrival at the post the men I had sent after moose returned with a cow and her calf; thus we had the foundation for a fair stock of meat, and while I remained in charge of Jasper House we never subsequently knew a shortage.

The two Iroquois who had been sent to pasture the thin horses arrived with them in excellent condition. Little remaining for the men to do I paid off four of the Iroquois and sent them to join their families, who were pitching along from Lac Ste. Anne. With the two remaining Iroquois I hunted

almost every day, sometimes with success and at others with nothing to show for our exhaustive climbing.

Jasper House is situated within the first range of mountains. After leaving Burnt Wood Lake the road runs over a spur of the mountain of that name and down to a valley three or four miles long by half to three-quarters of a mile broad. The entrance to the pass is extremely narrow. On the south the Roche Mayette rises from the river's edge. This mountain is steep to the point where the woods end and still steeper to the limit of vegetation, after which on three sides it rises smooth and perpendicular for hundreds of feet, looking for all the world like a great castle commanding the pass. On the north stands Roche Range, a long narrow mountain topped by a pointed peak. It is not quite so high as Roche Mayette, the river being crooked where it leaves the pass and the mountains overlapping. The post appears as if completely surrounded by mountains, with no outlet in any direction. Toward the west nothing but mountains, rising higher and higher, can be seen. On the north for about twelve miles runs the valley of the Assiniboine; on the south another valley some five miles long, blocked by a small detached mountain.

Just above the houses the river at low water spreads into numerous channels separated by sandbars and at high water becomes considerable of a lake. To the south of this lies a long sandy ridge a few yards wide, divided by a narrow channel. At high water this ridge is submerged and another beautiful

lake is formed. During the freshet small whitefish enter this lake, remaining when the water recedes. They weigh from a pound to a pound and a half, and are delicious. The water in no place is more than eight feet deep and as clear as crystal. On a bright day, standing on the hill-top above, we could see every weed and fish.

As Christmas approached the different families of Iroquois began to arrive at the post, bringing their hunts of furs and provisions. From among them I engaged regular hunters, providing them with horses for carrying meat, and they "pitched" off along the foothills north and south of the Athabasca. These Indians all had bands of horses of their own, which having been raised in the mountains were almost as surefooted as the sheep themselves.

The Iroquois had received orders to procure for me some bull mooseskins, dressed to parchment, which in the spring I instructed them to make into a large canoe, the seams being sewn with sinew and rubbed with tallow. In this canoe I embarked with eight men going through to York Factory, the cook and all furs, leather and provisions—some eighteen packs of ninety pounds each. Thus loaded we ran down to Fort Assiniboine, when we proceeded, with horses as usual, to Edmonton. This was at the close of the winter of 1858-9.

On my arrival I was informed by Chief Factor Christie that he wished me to go on with the brigades to York. As I had made all arrangements for the summer with the hunters at Jasper House nothing demanded my presence there; I consequently at

INDIANS TRAVELLING IN WINTER

once joined the brigades, and after the usual pulling, drifting and sailing we reached Norway House. Here the brigades were separated into units of four boats each, leaving in succession one day apart, an arrangement designed to avoid the delay and confusion incident to many crossing the narrow portages simultaneously.

I had charge of the last brigade. We proceeded all night, reaching the rapids well named Hell's Gate. Just at the foot rose an ugly rock which it was necessary to avoid by a sudden turn. One of the steersmen missed the turn and his boat came broadside on the rock. The next boat followed so closely that it ran into the first. Both were badly smashed and filled immediately. All the packs were submerged. The result was a three-day delay, in which we were employed in drying the packs and patching one of the boats. The other was so damaged that we burned her. We reached York Factory at the mouth of the Nelson River on Hudson Bay without further mishap.

York Factory, before the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway, which connected west and east by modern rails and changed the old established routes of trade and travel, was the depot at which all supplies for the Hudson's Bay Company's posts east of the Rockies and west of Fort William, including Mackenzie River, Athabasca, Peace River, Saskatchewan, Churchill River and part of the Red River Settlement, were landed from the Company's ships. Consequently it was the most important post in the North. Owing to the shallowness of the

water at the river mouth and for some distance out vessels from England anchored in what was called the "Five-Fathom Hole," two miles out, and the goods were brought ashore in flat-bottomed lighters drawing not more than four feet of water when loaded.

XX

I LEAVE THE SERVICE

We found the ship lying at Five-Fathom Hole and the cargoes being landed from the lighters.

Leaving York Factory, after a brief but busy interval at the Company's chief seaport, we had a fair return trip to Edmonton with the winter's supplies. On this route there are thirty-six portages, over some of which it was necessary to carry both boats and cargoes, the two longest being Grand Rapids, just above the outlet of the Saskatchewan, and Robson, between Norway House and Oxford House. There are the same number both ascending and descending the rivers, though they are not always the same portages, travelling upstream being a different matter from running down with the current and offering different conditions and impediments.

Having made all my preparations for another occupation of Jasper House I left Edmonton with a brigade of horses soon after my return from the Bay. As the road had by this time been fairly well cut out we travelled with far less trouble, but when nearing the McLeod River some of the animals, I discovered,

would be unlikely to last the trip. Taking a young Iroquois with me, therefore, I forged ahead to send back fresh horses.

We were riding through thick pine undergrowth on mossy ground when the growl of a grizzly close on our left startled us. We sprang from our saddles and the young Indian, armed with a lightly-loaded single-barrel flintlock, mumbling something about "a horse," rammed a bullet down on the shot and peering ahead tried to catch sight of the author of the sound. At this moment I saw the brute emerge at the side of the road and rise on his hind legs.

"Here he comes!" I cried.

The Indian swung round, pulled the trigger and raced madly away. "Safety first!" to put it in the current vernacular.

I was not carrying my gun, the trees making it troublesome to handle. When the Indian fired, therefore, I climbed into my saddle and gazed round. The bear was not in sight. I then looked for my man, whom I presently made out feverishly re-loading out of harm's way in a tree. He informed me that just ahead of us was a dead horse. I thought it strange a grizzly should run when he had such a cache of meat to guard, and the boy was evidently of the same mind, for I found it hard to persuade him to descend. When at length he did so he was anxious to quit the locality with all possible speed. However, I wanted to know what had become of that bear. Ultimately I got the youth to accompany me, on condition that I should act the part of scout and that he should not surrender his gun.

MAKING A PORTAGE

"All right," I said, "if you will only fire at close range—and straight."

We had not advanced more than a dozen yards when we came upon the grizzly, dead.

The lad began to laugh, boasting that he had taken deadly aim between the eyes, but on examining the head I could find the mark of only a single grain of shot on the nose. The boy had taken no aim at all. The bullet had reached the animal's heart quite by chance, and bruin after retreating a short distance had succumbed. I have seen quite a number of grizzlies shot through the heart, but never saw one fall at once. They almost invariably make a rush in a half-circle, and when they drop are stone dead.

This was my first introduction to the grizzly, but in later years I made many acquaintances among them. Some of my interviews I shall describe in due time.

I found everything in order at Jasper House on my arrival. The hunters had done well, and a good stock of dried provisions was in store.

I had sent word to the Shushwaps that the fort was re-established and they were now coming in to trade as formerly, so I was reasonably sure of a good season. This expectation was amply verified when the returns went out in the spring.

The winter of 1859-60 passed much as had other winters. I made an occasional trip to see the horses, did some trapping of marten, foxes, mink and lynx, in which I had become quite adept, and by the end of the winter had gathered a nice lot of furs of my own. By the rules of the Company all furs that

came into our hands, no matter how, we were obliged to put in store at the same prices as those paid the Indians at the post, so the profits from my personal operations as a trapper that winter were not great.

I made several trips with one or other of my hunters after moose, desiring to learn how to approach the animals. I had been able to kill them when pointed out for me, but up till then had not attempted to hunt moose alone.

When spring arrived we made another large skin canoe and travelled by the old route to Fort Assiniboine and Edmonton, reaching there before the brigade left for York Factory. After three weeks at Edmonton, during which I seized the opportunity to indulge in a buffalo hunt, I took horses and returned to Jasper House, where I spent most of the summer, pitching about from the head waters of the McLeod to the upper stretches of the Smoky and making dried provisions.

We killed a great number of moose, caribou, bighorn and bear, not to mention Rocky Mountain marmot. The marmot is smaller than a badger and equal as food when roasted to the choicest sucking pig. They were very numerous in places, and on one day I bagged twenty-two. Porcupines, which are almost as great a delicacy as the marmot, were also plentiful.

Securing the different caches of provisions we had made during the summer, I again left for Edmonton, going this time on horseback across country in preference to using the canoe route via Fort Assiniboine. On our arrival we learned that my

friend and patron, Sir George Simpson, was dead. He had been extremely weak for some time, and the excitement of receiving the Prince of Wales, afterward King Edward VII., on his visit to Montreal, had proved too much for him.

He was a man with a wonderful memory. He knew the country from end to end, not wholly from actual travel but in part from written reports. He was in close touch through correspondence with almost every officer and thus had intimate information regarding every post. Without doubt he was the most capable governor the Hudson's Bay Company ever had.

On learning of his death I at once handed in my resignation, to take effect the following spring.

After the usual routine of packing and preparation I again started for Jasper House, and on my arrival sent word to my brother, Walter Moberly, C.E., who was chief of the Canadian Pacific Railway survey parties in British Columbia, and indeed the actual discoverer of the Eagle Pass, that I would join him in the summer.

The winter (1860-1) passed uneventfully, and again, and for the last time, I set out in a deerskin canoe for Fort Assiniboine on my way back to Edmonton. My time being out on the 1st of June I told Mr. Christie I would not remain in the service after that date. He tried hard to persuade me to change my mind and asked me to go with the boats to York Factory or Norway House, but I was firm. He then said he could not arrange my accounts until his own return from that journey. This, however,

was merely a ruse to keep me until the season became too advanced for me to cross the Rockies.

During my short stay at Edmonton I made another run after buffalo, and little thought as I dismounted alongside a cow I had shot that on my next ride south of the Saskatchewan not one of these fine animals would be left, for though their numbers had greatly diminished since I first came to the country hundreds still roamed the plains.

I made a trip to the Rockies and enjoyed some good bighorn hunting between the head waters of the McLeod and the Smoky. Being no longer in the service I did not remain continuously with the regular hunters but penetrated the mountains farther than they were accustomed to do; the game here, being less hunted, was more plentiful and less wild.

I returned to Edmonton before the boats arrived and remained until the 10th of October. Then, the Jasper House outfit having left some days previously, I loaded my own pack horses with provisions and with a good saddle horse prepared to go alone. I was the recipient of much gratuitous if well-meant caution to the effect that I was certain to die in the mountains, it was too late in the season to cross, the Fraser River would be dangerous and I should not be able to find a canoe—in fact, troubles of every variety were alleged to be ahead of me. After much handshaking, however, and sundry stirrup-cups I started. And that, up to the present, has been my last sight of Edmonton.

What a change I shall find if ever I visit it again!

XXI

THE LAST OF THE SNAKE INDIANS

I MADE camp ten or twelve miles out of Edmonton, and next day travelled as far as Lac Ste. Anne, where I passed the night at the Roman Catholic mission. Two days later I had caught up the Jasper House brigade, with which I kept the rest of the way to their post, reaching it on 27th October, seventeen days from Edmonton, the distance covered being put at 220 miles.

At Jasper I induced a young halfbreed to join me and try his luck in British Columbia. We started in company across the pass to Tete Jaune Cache, the snow a foot deep on the ground and the streams frozen over but not solid enough to bear us. We were obliged, therefore, to cut our way through brush and fallen timber at points where we should otherwise have followed a creek-bed. Six days of this brought us to Tete Jaune, where we planned to embark.

At the Cache we found encamped a small band of Shushwaps, among them a woman, the last member of a petty tribe called the Snake Indians. From the Shushwaps I procured a dugout and some fresh

provisions. They gave me also a description of the river as far as the Hudson's Bay post named Fort George, close to the forks of the Stuart and Fraser rivers.

The Snake woman just mentioned had lived through one of the most remarkable experiences of which I have ever heard. Eighteen or nineteen years before her tribe had consisted of some twenty families, living entirely in the mountains and for decades at war with the Wood Assiniboines. The Snakes at the time of which I write were camped on the side of a mountain west of the post, and a band of Assiniboines at Lac Brule, just below the entrance to the pass. The Assiniboines proposed a meeting at the head of the lake for the purpose of ratifying a peace, each band to come unarmed.

The Snakes agreed, and the men of the band, leaving their guns, arrived and were placed in the inner circle round the council fire. The Assiniboines, however, concealed their guns under their blankets and at a prearranged signal drew them and shot down in cold blood every man of their ancient enemies. They then rushed to the Snake camp and wiped out the rest of the band, with the exception of three young women whom they brought as prisoners to Fort Assiniboine. Here they were stripped, bound and placed in a tent, to be tortured and finally dispatched at a great scalp dance to be held next day.

During the night a French halfbreed, Bellerose by name, crept into the lodge where the prisoners lay and cut their bonds. All he could provide them

with was his scalping knife and a fire bag containing flint, steel and punk. The women made their escape and followed the Athabasca River to its junction with the Baptiste. Here they could not agree as to their further course. Two decided to follow the Athabasca, the third the Baptiste. The two, making a raft and taking with them the fire bag, crossed the Baptiste and were never afterwards heard of.

The third, left only with the knife, travelled up the Baptiste some thirty miles and there made preparations for wintering. Berries were still to be had, she managed to kill a few squirrels and with the sinews from their tails made snares for rabbits. She killed some porcupines and groundhogs, too, dried them and out of the rabbit skins made herself a dress. She kindled a fire in the primitive way, by revolving the point of one dry stick rapidly in a hole made in another, and collected a large pile of dry wood. By the time winter had set in she was prepared for it.

Thus she lived until midsummer, gathering gum from the poplars and making dried meat from rabbits and other small animals she killed. Then she removed several days' journey to another good hunting ground.

Three months later an Iroquois hunter wandering far from his accustomed haunts came upon a series of strange tracks and traces. They puzzled him. He was unable to decipher what kind of animal could have made them. So many tales of "*weetigoes*" and other mysterious beings were current that none

thought it worth while to travel so far to look into this one, and for a time the whole matter died out.

Next summer, however, when the hunters were in camp some little distance from the Baptiste, this man decided to return to the spot and try to find out what animal had made the mystifying tracks. He struck the river where the Snake woman was living, saw snares set, trees barked and fresh prints in the ground that resembled those of a human being. He was sure he had now run upon a real *weetigo* (cannibal) and, being a plucky man, determined to hunt and kill him.

Creeping round cautiously, with his gun at full cock, and prepared at any moment to be pounced upon, he came to a high bank where an immense collection of dry wood with a little fire near it was piled not far from the entrance to a small cave. He could see no other signs of life.

He hid himself close to the cave, and presently a wild creature in a short skirt of rabbit skins approached with a load of rabbits. Throwing down the pack, this grotesque object picked up some sticks with which to replenish the fire, and recognizing the sex the hunter knew at once that she must be one of the three women who had escaped two years before from the Assiniboines.

Noticing him at length she made a frenzied effort to escape but was soon overtaken. She had become perfectly wild, and he had much difficulty in bringing her to the camp. She remained with his family for two years. Then the officer in Jasper House kept

her for another two years as servant to his wife, at the end of which time she married a Shushwap. She was the only survivor of her tribe.

A small stream to the north-west of Jasper House still bears on some maps the name of Snake Indian River.

XXII

I RE-ENGAGE WITH THE COMPANY IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Told by the Indians that between Tete Jaune Cache and Fort George only one dangerous canyon would be encountered, we pushed out in our canoe and reached it on the second evening. Upon going forward to take an observation I saw that no craft could run the canyon straight through following the current, but that it might be done by turning sharply into an eddy formed by a point of rock projecting from the south shore.

It was extremely cold, with much drifting ice, but next morning I undertook to make the attempt without taking a second observation. Once embarked, however, I found myself in trouble. The eddy was full of floating ice. No alternative presented itself than to plunge in and push through, and by good fortune I succeeded. The following autumn a party from Ontario made the same attempt, and of five men only two came out alive.

This canyon is about thirty miles from Fort George. We arrived there that evening, when I found that the letters I was expecting had been forwarded to Stuart Lake, six days' travel up the

Stuart River. We left for the lake next morning, encountering more drifting ice, which gradually thickened until, at the end of the third day, we reached the point at which the Stuart River empties into Fraser Lake, just half way to our destination. Here the ice completely filled the river, and it was impossible to proceed farther by canoe. Packing our blankets, provisions and other absolute essentials, we started in eighteen inches of snow overland, and after another four days of grinding toil reached Stuart Lake.

As the letters from my brother (who was now assistant surveyor-general in British Columbia) informed me that he had been sent to Peace River, I re-engaged with the Hudson's Bay Company for three years and took charge of Fraser Lake. This post was located on the east end of the lake, about thirty miles south of Stuart Lake, the head post of the district. The Nechaco River flows into the Fraser two miles from this point. It is the valley of this river that the Canadian National Railway now traverses. At the post we raised cabbage, turnips, carrots, onions, potatoes and other vegetables. A large part of the country from the mouth of the Nechaco up would make excellent wheat land, and south again much good soil is to be found. No doubt these lands are now the homes of many settlers.

The country abounded in caribou and other game, and was also rich in fur-bearing animals—bear, beaver, marten, fox, mink and otter. Fraser Lake was well stocked with white and jackfish and several

varieties of suckers, while salmon in thousands came up from the sea every summer to spawn.

The natives at both Fraser and Stuart Lakes are called Carrier Indians. They must at some distant period have crossed the Rockies from Athabasca, as most of their names for animals and other objects are similar to those used by the Chippewyans of Athabasca, though not pronounced so gutturally. Their numerals from one to eight are exactly the same, but nine and ten are different.

I remained in charge of Fraser Lake post until the 1st of June, 1864, at which date my three years' engagement terminated. During that period the returns were very satisfactory. When I first took charge two martens made one made-beaver, and other furs ranked in proportion, but before I left we were paying from two-and-a-half to five dollars a skin according to colour, on a cash currency basis. This change and advance in price was due to the influx of miners and traders. The Cariboo mines were then at the peak of their boom, and new placer diggings were being discovered from time to time. So many people came into the country that the Company could not control the price of furs, and the competition of free traders among the Indians forced values up. These men paid in cash and valued commodities in terms of dollars and cents. The Company was compelled to do the same.

As I have before mentioned the distance between Fraser Lake post and Stuart Lake is about thirty miles. The intervening country is a mountain which, from Fraser Lake, rises gradually for fifteen

miles, then descends another ten miles to Stuart Lake, the post being situated five miles farther on at the south-east end. I frequently, both in winter and summer, ran over to pass a few days with my friends at Stuart Lake post.

On one occasion while on my way over the mountain a few days before Christmas, accompanied by an Indian, having reached the top we noticed the track of a bear which had evidently passed some little time before. As the snow was deep I knew he must have been scared in some way out of his den, and seeking fresh quarters would not have gone far.

We made camp, had dinner and started after the bear, leaving our kettles and provisions in camp. The bear had travelled farther than we anticipated, and had crossed some small lakes and swamps, where we lost his tracks.

It was growing late when we approached a muskeg covered with large mounds of moss. I was ahead and noticed a place where the bear had commenced to dig a hole. I was advancing with my eye on the spot when I heard a shot behind me. The bear, it seemed, had made his den in another place and the Indian, observing him leave it, had fired, putting a ball through the brute's nose. Bruin had then backed into his hole. We failed to induce him to come out, so were obliged to finish him where we found him. It was close to midnight by the time we had secured the carcase. He was an enormous male and in prime condition.

On our return to our base next day I found a dead wolverine that had devoured the poison I had left

in camp, so that counting the skin, meat and grease of the bear and the pelt of the wolverine my jaunt was a highly profitable one.

Stuart Lake is considerably larger than Fraser Lake, and to the best of my recollection some fifty miles long, with a breadth in places of four and five miles. Fish are plentiful. Salmon arrive every summer and salt-water sturgeon come up as far as the lake, though they never enter it. Fresh-water sturgeon are numerous, as in Fraser Lake.

The country round Stuart Lake is rocky and quite unfit for farming. In fact, the whole country is full of detached mountains and only in some of the valleys may any good land be found. Fish, however, including trout and pickerel, abound in all the lakes and rivers.

XXIII

THE CARIBOO GOLD RUSH

On 1st June, 1864, I left the Hudson's Bay Company's service for the second time, handing over my charge to the clerk sent out to assume it. As my account could not be closed until received from Victoria I decided upon remaining at Fraser Lake for some hunting and fishing until August, when I could accompany the Hudson's Bay Company's boats going down to Fort Alexander on the Fraser River below Quesnelle. Here I should obtain a settlement.

In a small canoe, accompanied by a young Indian lad, I first hunted up the Nechaco River. My bag at our initial camp was five beaver. Next morning when about to fire at another beaver, at a sign from my boy I looked up to see a bear feeding on a hill some distance off. I recognized him as a two-year-old grizzly.

We landed and had approached rather close when two more came in view, a large female and her cub. My lad promptly declined to advance any nearer and made for the canoe. When within two hundred yards of them the female saw me, reared up and then commenced to walk slowly away. I hurried after her and she turned again, waiting for my next

move. Seeing that I still advanced she dropped on all fours and came to meet me. I halted until she was within six feet of me and then threw my cap in her face. She reared again, and as she came down I pressed the trigger and she rolled over, stone dead. I then shot the cub. The other had by this time disappeared.

I may here claim that few white men and not many Indians have killed more bears than myself, and I never risked firing at a grizzly from a farther distance than six or seven feet. I was often told I was foolhardy, but the truth is I was afraid to fire from a longer range. If a bear is wounded and makes a rush I defy any man to place an effective shot, for as the bear approaches his head swings from side to side. All the grizzly-hunting accidents I have ever seen or heard of have been due to firing first from too great a distance and crippling the animal only ; then the beast closed with the hunter, and either badly mangled or killed him before he could administer the knockout shot.

If you meet a grizzly he will always rise once or twice on his hind legs. If on approaching and when within a couple of yards he doesn't stand erect, throw your guncoat, cap or anything at hand in his face, and he will always rise. As he comes down for the final rush take steady aim, and the man who misses the vital spot from that distance has no business to hunt bear and probably will never have another chance.

One thing you should never do is turn your back or retreat. If you are so insane the bear comes on

with a rush, and as a man cannot run as fast as a bear it is fatal to attempt it.

Nine out of ten grizzlies, unless you follow or otherwise bother them, will walk off without attempting to molest you. The only circumstances in which they will attack is when they have a dead animal "in cache"; in this case they will stand their ground almost every time. On the other hand, the large silver-tip grizzly of the Rockies is as a rule ready to attack under any circumstances.

I am writing, of course, of the conditions of sixty years ago. With the advent of superior modern rifles this caution against shooting at long range may be less necessary.

We proceeded up the Nechaco for a long distance, shooting ducks, geese and beaver. For twenty or thirty miles it traverses a rough mountainous country; farther on, until Bella Coola on the coast is reached, there are areas of excellent land and tracts of fine timber.

In due time I embarked with the Company's boats, and at Fort Alexander settled my account and drew the balance owing me in cash. I then continued with the boats to Quesnelle, where I found that my brother and a Mr. Dewdney had the contract for building the first wagon-road from Quesnelle to the Cariboo mines. I joined one of their camps as paymaster at Jack-of-Clubs Creek and remained for more than a month. The road was some sixty miles in length, with a bridge across the Cottonwood River. This bridge and most of the road were completed, however, before I engaged.

The gold fever was at its height ; new mines were being discovered almost daily. Thousands of prospectors were coming in, hundreds returning "dead broke." They came from all parts of the world, and were of all conditions : military officers, soldiers, sailors, lawyers, parsons, merchants, sons of bishops, men from Cornwall, from Australia, California, Mexico, Texas ; gamblers, deserters—in fact, men of every race and kind imaginable. They besieged us with requests for work to enable them to progress a little farther on the way to fortune, or to help them on their backward journey, stranded and disheartened. All along the sixty miles of road were graves, chiefly of murdered men, but some of men who had died of hardships. Such was mining in 1864 in the Cariboo.

About the middle of October I decided to return as a free trader to Fraser Lake for the winter. I bought a small outfit from the merchants at Quesnelle, and engaging an Indian, started with some traders bound to Stuart Lake and Peace River. In the party were also a few working their way back to Ontario via Peace River and the Saskatchewan.

After a fair trip as far as Fort George we parted with all except those heading for Stuart Lake, with whom we continued to Chin Lac, half way between the two former places. Here the rivers separate, and with my Indian I took the branch to Fraser Lake alone.

Upon our arrival our first task was to collect a supply of whitefish, and by the time I had six thousand staged the winter was almost upon us. I

now moved up the Nechaco to the point where the trail from the principal Indian villages crossed to the Hudson's Bay Company's post. Here I built a shack and passed the winter trapping and trading. I found when spring opened that I had made a good trade. I sold my furs to the Hudson's Bay Company, and my accounts when balanced showed a profit of more than fourteen hundred dollars.

A trip to the Rockies and across by the Peace River was the next project to engage my fancy, but before starting I ran with an Indian down to Quesnelle for a stock of provisions and ammunition. Upon our return we made good time to the forks of the Salmon River, which stream we followed to its source, a small lake on the height of land, out of which the water ran both ways, one stream flowing down to the Pacific, the other to the Arctic via Peace and Mackenzie Rivers. We crossed the lake and went into camp where the opposite stream left it. Here we built a small dam to collect head enough to enable us to run our canoe to the first beaver dam, which we broke, and then carried on with the flush of water to the next. This manœuvre we repeated seven times, or until the stream had become too broad and deep for the beaver to dam.

With plenty of water we had no difficulty in reaching McLeod's Lake. Thence by a river of five short miles we descended to the Parsnip, one of the main branches of the Peace. This route over the divide was used by traders and miners at this time, frequently with boats and canoes capable of carrying cargoes of sixty to eighty hundred-pound " pieces."

By this system of rivers a traveller might start from the Pacific at the mouth of the Fraser, cross the Rockies and gain the Arctic Ocean at the mouth of the Mackenzie and seldom find it necessary to put his foot on dry land.

The country from the Fraser to the east side of the Rockies by this route is good for nothing from an agricultural standpoint, though fine tracts of timber are met with here and there, and it probably contains valuable minerals.

On reaching the mouth of the Findlay, the largest branch of the Peace in British Columbia, we encountered the first important rapids. They lie at the foot of the Rockies on the west side, and are not particularly formidable. I have run them with loaded scows, boats, dugouts and small birchbark canoes. Commencing at their feet, the Peace flows through the Rockies for seventy-five miles, a majestic stream, with not a rapid or a shoal as an obstacle to navigation. A good-sized steamer might run the whole distance. The scenery is magnificent—unsurpassed, I venture to say, by any in the world.

At the east side of the Rockies rises a small dome-like mountain around the base of which the river circles for thirty or more miles. No craft could enter some of the many canyons through which this stretch of the river flows and live. The portage across, twelve miles long, follows one of the banks of a former channel which must at some time have become blocked with ice and forced the river into its present channel. Signs of the old river-bed may easily be recognized anywhere along the portage.

Here I found two traders, Bill Cust, a Californian "forty-niner," and Carey, another old miner. Both these men afterward settled in Edmonton. Cust owned a large farm near the present Alberta capital, and died in the summer of 1908. Carey became a leading merchant, but is now also dead.

Cust and Carey persuaded me to join them in their enterprise. I invested twelve hundred dollars but refused to take an active part in the trade, preferring to hunt and trap. After looking the country over I decided to make my home fifteen miles south of the portage on a lake which now bears my name on the maps. It lies almost within the first range of mountains and was teeming with fine white, trout, jack and other varieties of fish. Thousands of wild fowl, geese and many swans found their way to it in spring and Fall; beaver, moose and caribou were plentiful in the surrounding territory. Bears—black, brown and grizzly—were also numerous, and bighorn sheep might be hunted within twenty miles. No Indians frequented the spot, and I had a hunter's paradise all to myself.

I built a comfortable shack, made a canoe, and having killed three moose, two black bears, thirty-two beavers, and put on the drying stage four or five hundred whitefish and trout before the ice took, had everything in readiness for winter when it set in. This was in the fall of 1865, and here I made my headquarters until the spring of 1868. Part of these three years I spent alone; at other times I had Indian companions.

The winters I employed in hunting and trapping,

while in summer I made trips across the Rockies as far as the height of land at the Salmon River with my partners. On a fine open flat, half a mile square, at the west end of the lake, I made my garden early each spring. The soil was a rich loam two feet deep, and I raised excellent onions, carrots and potatoes. I should have grown other garden stuff had I possessed the seeds.

After the ice broke one spring I went up a small stream, navigable for some eight miles, in a canoe. On this stretch I shot before the time for beginning my garden one hundred and seventeen beavers, and before the fur was out of season about sixty more, the latter as they passed my camp on their way down to the lake. Ammunition being extremely scarce I only now and then expended it on a goose or a swan and seldom wasted any on ducks, although they were there in thousands. During the first winter I killed only thirteen moose and four caribou.

One chase after a grizzly gave two of us three days' hard work, with nothing to eat or drink but snow water.

The snow was about a foot deep, and I was hunting when late in the afternoon I came on the track of a bear. Next morning with a companion I went forth in pursuit of bruin, taking with me our blankets, tea kettle and food for one day. The bear had travelled farther than we had anticipated, but toward evening we came to a small round mountain on which we were certain we should find his den. We camped at the foot and no doubt the bear heard us, for it was a still night and bitterly cold. Next morning, as we

were taking a turn round the hill, we started a moose and began firing at him. The range was too great, however, and he escaped.

The shooting must have decided the bear to shift his quarters, and when we again struck his track he probably had an hour or more the start of us. Off we set, expecting soon to overhaul him, but he led us into such frightful places—down such deep gulches, up such steep hills—that we never got near enough for a shot. When night came there was nothing for it but to camp, and without blankets or kettle, which we had left at the previous night's camp. We made the best of a tough situation by keeping a large fire well stoked until daybreak.

All next day we followed the bear, and all next night found our only solace in a big fire. The following day found us again on his track, determined to persevere to a finish.

About ten o'clock in the morning of the fourth day we caught sight of him at last, climbing a bare hill half a mile away. We put on steam and presently were overhauling him. The hill sloped down to the Pine River, and the chase began to get exciting. But the river was in our way, frozen only at the banks and open in the middle. When we reached the near bank it was only to see the bear climbing out on the opposite one, and here the chase ended.

We were eighteen miles from home, and when at last we reached it, it may easily be imagined that we were both hungry and disgruntled and ready enough to swear vengeance against all bears for the future.

XXIV

I LAND AT FORT CHIPPEWYAN

During the next summer, following my return from my annual trip, I had a number of opportunities to compensate myself by taking toll of the bears for this bootless chase.

Going down to the lake shore one day for something, I caught sight of an animal which, having crossed the bay opposite, was just entering the woods a quarter of a mile distant. I took it for a moose and ran past the camp, picking up on my way my double-barrel gun but not my powder horn or shot bag.

When abreast the spot where I had last seen the animal I slowed up and advanced cautiously. I had reached a small opening and was about to enter when out came an enormous silver-tip.

Our eyes met simultaneously, and I saw at once that it was a case either of me or the bear. I stood my ground, therefore, placing all my dependence upon the two shots in my gun. The first was at such close range that it burnt his hair and he fell instantly. I waited over him some little time so that if he moved I might finish him with the left barrel, but it was unnecessary. He was stone dead.

This was the largest bear I have ever killed. He was so old that his teeth were worn to blunt points. I persuaded myself that he was the beast we had followed the previous winter, and so called quits—for the time being.

The Indians inhabiting this region were a small band of Sikanees, numbering round twenty-five families. With the exception of two brothers they hunted north from the Peace River as far as the Liard, in and along the foothills. The brothers hunted along Pine River. I thus had a large tract of territory to myself, and any day I wished could have started half a dozen moose.

On their return from their annual trip to Quesnelle my partners passed the time washing gold on the bars of the Peace, which after high water left a fresh deposit that paid approximately the same each year. These bars would pay two, four, six, eight and sometimes as much as sixteen dollars per day. They worked only with the old-fashioned rocker, and when after a day or two a bar was worked out, the time lost in moving and re-setting the equipment did not leave much profit. Had it not been for the furs we trapped and traded we could not have existed. Flour cost fifty dollars a sack, tea five dollars a pound, salt a dollar, and other necessaries in proportion.

In the spring of 1868 we agreed to dissolve partnership and leave the locality. We sold out to the Hudson's Bay Company and separated, Cust and Carey going to Edmonton. I had promised the American fur companies with whom I had done

business as a free trader, and some of whose agents had led me to correspond with them, that if I ever turned up at Sitka, where they had important establishments, I would proceed to their headquarters at 'Frisco and run a steamer through Behring Straits to the mouth of the Mackenzie and as far up the river as I could go, and there start trading in opposition to the Hudson's Bay Company.

Having parted with the old Company I now decided, in order to gain sufficient knowledge of the Mackenzie River country before entering upon the new undertaking, to go down Peace River, thence down the Mackenzie as far as Peel River, cross the Rockies to the Yukon and then travel down the coast to Sitka.

As Peace River at the present time is being much lauded as a farming country and many settlers have already gone in, I shall digress for a moment to give some description of the district. From its rise beyond the foothills to the mouth of the Peace at Great Slave Lake I know every foot of it.

Peace River, after it leaves the Rockies, is already a large stream, comparing with the Saskatchewan at Edmonton, but with more water. From the foot of the portage over the canyon which I have already described the river is navigable for seven or eight hundred miles to fifty miles below Fort Vermilion. Here a ridge of rock across the stream gives a fall of seven or eight feet. Between this point and Fort Smith, a stretch of three hundred and thirty miles, there is not a single impediment to navigation. At Fort Smith a number of similar ridges span the river,

making portages necessary at five places, over some of which both boats and cargoes have to be carried. From the first to the last of these rapids is about thirteen miles, although the distance between the modern steamboat landings is sixteen miles, horses and oxen now being employed on this stretch of track.

From the lower rapid to the Arctic Circle the rivers, as well as Great Slave Lake, are navigable for vessels of considerable tonnage, and the Hudson's Bay Company for many years have had screw steamers running to the mouth of the Mackenzie.

The agricultural lands begin at the foothills of the Rockies and extend east over eight hundred miles to sixty miles below Red River, with a width of fifteen to forty miles. The soil generally is a rich loam, with clay or limestone bottom. The climate is better than in the Saskatchewan valley, due no doubt to the two mountain passes of the Pine and Peace Rivers being close together and the mountains from the Rockies to the coast more detached than those farther south, allowing the warm winds of the Pacific to reach the prairies without becoming chilled as they do in the Saskatchewan country.

The south side of the river is the more heavily wooded. From the foothills the prairie is not extensive until the mouth of the Smoky River is reached, but from that point to beyond Cadotte River fine open stretches are frequent. From a little below the Cadotte to Fort Vermilion the country is largely wooded. From Fort Vermilion to a point a few miles below Red River another

considerable tract of prairie is encountered. Most of the land is good, whether prairie or wooded.

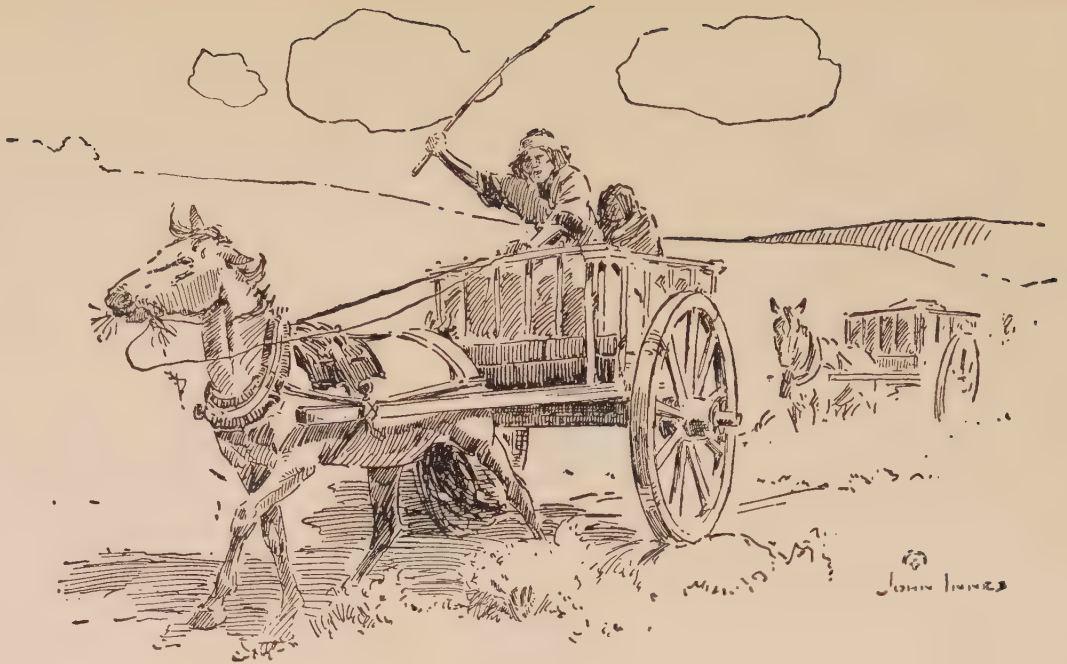
On the north side of the foothills as far as Dunvegan the country is fairly open, particularly about Halfway River, and from Dunvegan to Fort Vermilion prairies extend most of the way, some along the banks of the Peace, some back from the river. There is also a very fine section a few miles up the Battle River.

Behind Fort Vermilion for almost eighty miles north lies one of the choicest stretches of ranching country imaginable. The water everywhere is free from alkali and good, thousands of tons of hay might be cut, and the prairies are covered with wild pea-vine and rich grass. Again, in the vicinity of Fort Vermilion and at the Red River, fifty miles below, the country is admirably adapted for farming. At Red River, over a solid bed of limestone, the soil is deep and black.

Fine timber is obtainable almost anywhere in the Peace valley—on the points of the river, on the islands or on the uplands.

Besides the break in navigation on the main river where the Red River enters, another rapid below obstructs the main channel, but a second channel, deep and navigable, runs behind a large island in the stream. In the rocks on both sides of the river at this point many veins of gypsum of the best quality appear.

Half a mile below Vermilion is Peace Point, an ideal location for a farm. From the river bank a beautiful prairie runs back for a short distance.



RED RIVER CARTS

Then a grassy hill or terrace rises at a steep incline perhaps a hundred and fifty feet, the level ground at the top not more than thirty or forty feet wide. Then comes another slope with a rich prairie stretching far back from the crest.

A striking thing about this ridge is a number of circular holes, twenty feet or so in diameter and twelve to fifteen feet deep, which look as if they had been dug as a measure of defence in some prehistoric period, and certainly no better site could have been chosen.

To return to my personal adventures: In pursuance of my plan to descend the Mackenzie, shortly after the spring of 1868 opened I decided to run down the small river leading from Moberly Lake, my headquarters for three years, to Peace River. The Indians warned me that it was impossible, owing to the rapids. There appeared no other way of getting my canoe on the Peace, however, so I started. I certainly had a time of it, but, being a good judge of water and well up in the management of a canoe, came through safely.

I continued on downstream slowly, frequently remaining for stretches of two or three weeks in a place to hunt.

A little below Cadotte River I camped on an island, and toward evening paddled upstream on the chance of getting a shot at a beaver. I noticed two moose enter the water on the opposite shore. I crossed the river, and when they came in secured them both. I had just begun to skin one when a third approached the water a little below me. I

stalked him also. I thus had a cow, her yearling and a two-year-old bull. As it was growing dark I merely removed the entrails and returned to camp.

On starting next morning at daybreak I again saw three moose in the water—a cow, a large bull and a three-year-old bull. I kept the opposite shore until above them; then bagged all three. The flies were terrible, which made the animals take the water.

Having so much meat on hand I determined to dry it and remain in the vicinity for the winter. Meanwhile I built a comfortable shack. This work done I decided to go back as far as Fort St. John and hunt bear for a supply of grease. I reached St. John about the end of July when the berries were ripe and the bears fat, and went into camp about five miles below the fort. I remained three weeks, in the course of which I killed sixteen black and brown bears and seven grizzlies.

On the way down the river I shot four more black bears, but on reaching home found that my entire cache of dried meat, as if in reprisal, had been devoured by bears. This did not trouble me greatly, however, as I had my gun and the country was full of game.

I now busied myself in putting the shanty in order for the winter, but took time occasionally to indulge in a hunt for fresh meat. This place is marked on the map as "Moberly's House," and I often wonder if any of the logs still remain. It was the first house to be built between Dunvegan and Battle River.

The snow was quite deep until a little past New Year of the winter of 1868-9. On the 12th, 13th and 14th of January a warm Chinook wind, with occasional rain, carried most of it off. Clear, calm, cold weather followed for five weeks, no snow fell, and the Indians who had failed to kill game during the three days of warmer weather suffered. The air was so still and sound and scent travelled so far that it was impossible to get within gunshot of a live animal. I had been fortunate enough to kill six moose during that interval, and as I did not require all of this meat I gave five of the carcases to a band of Beaver Indians in camp a few miles from me, who were thankful enough to get them.

Martens and foxes were scarce that winter, and I did not secure many furs, but with the arrival of open water I got one hundred and thirty-two beavers and two otters.

The following summer I spent hunting up and down the Peace River, until in the middle of September, the flies being gone, I started down-stream with the intention of wintering somewhere on the Mackenzie. On arriving at Fort Chippewyan I found the chief factor away with the brigade to Norway House and his wife very unwell, with no one to look after her. I therefore remained until his return. The season being now far advanced the officer persuaded me to postpone my departure, and I took temporary employment to oversee the work of the post and of the other employees about the place.

XXV

I ESTABLISH FORT McMURRAY

The Athabasca District extended two hundred miles up the Peace River to Fort Vermilion, taking in the Red River post; then down the Slave, the continuation of the Peace below Lake Athabasca, one hundred and ten miles to Fort Smith. At the east end of Lake Athabasca was another post, Fond du Lac, and one hundred and eighty miles up the Athabasca River still another, established for the Hudson's Bay Company by myself. This I named Fort McMurray after a chief factor who was one of my oldest friends.

Fort Chippewyan, head post of the Athabasca District, stands on a short channel connecting at the west end of Lake Athabasca with a second much smaller lake. It is prettily situated on a gentle rise above the water, the houses well-built and white-washed, set in an orderly row, with the Church Mission Society's chapel at one end and the unpretentious dwellings of the officer in charge and his clerks and the large stores of the Company at the other, giving it the appearance of a small village.

On a high point a quarter of a mile beyond, at the

west end of the channel and overlooking the small lake, is the Roman Catholic Mission. This also, viewed from the water on the east, with its handsome chapel, nuns' residence, priests' dwelling, stores and out-buildings, is a picturesque establishment. At that time the Mission was in charge of Rev. Father Pascal, later bishop of Saskatchewan and resident in Prince Albert.

The Indians trading at this post were with few exceptions Roman Catholics, and I must say that in all my experience I never saw natives better behaved or more sincerely religious, or by whom their priest was more loved and respected. Many of their children attended the school taught by the Sisters of Charity, where the instruction included reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic, music, deportment and religious exercises. It was a treat for us to visit the mission, and we were always hospitably received, the sisters delighting to have their pupils sing, play the organ or recite for their guests. The children were clean and well dressed, which was by no means the case before they went to the school. The sisters each year cultivated a fine garden of vegetables, nor did they forget their feminine love for flowers, which they grew in great variety and profusion.

In the spring of 1870 I was persuaded once more by the chief factor to abandon my purpose of starting again for the North and to re-enter the Hudson's Bay Company's service—this time to establish a post at the foot of the rapids on the Athabasca as a terminus for a proposed steamboat route. Commencing at the new post this route

was to follow the Athabasca River one hundred and eighty-five miles to its outlet in the lake, cross Lake Athabasca, descend the Slave River one hundred and ten miles to Fort Smith, and ascend the Peace two hundred and twenty miles to Red River, its tributary. Here, as I have previously mentioned, rapids intervened, opposing an obstacle to further navigation.

The ice having cleared, I left Fort Chippewyan on the 11th of May with two boats and their crews and five men who were to remain with me for the summer. A blizzard the last three days of the trip made travelling anything but pleasant, but as the wind was fair we carried on and landed, in a foot of snow, at the mouth of the Clearwater River.

I chose a site for the fort in a thick poplar wood, and the weather having turned fine we began clearing the ground. I was surprised to discover during this operation evidences of a previous post on this identical spot. Enquiry disclosed the fact that, eighty-six years before, this forgotten post had been abandoned in consequence of the death from smallpox of almost all the Indians in the locality.

Two of my first tasks, while the labour of the boat crews was available, were squaring logs for the houses and the planting of a garden. These crews would await the arrival of the brigade from Chippewyan and were with me until the last day of May.

I set the men to work and we built this first summer a temporary house for myself, a good store, men's house, and carpenter's shop. In the ensuing winter we had logs squared, boards sawn and

everything in readiness to put up a good officers' house as soon as warm weather arrived.

When the brigade passed south in the spring our furs were shipped, and I sent my men to Chippewyan for supplies.

I was rather surprised when, in that spring of 1871, Dutch Henry—I never learned his real name—jealously guarding a small pack of furs, turned up at Fort McMurray on his way to Lac la Biche. Dutch Henry was something of a character. He had drifted into the Peace River country two years before, and at odd times had worked for the Roman Catholic Missions and for traders. He also trapped a little occasionally. He was a short, stumpy man with a small pug nose in a round pink face, down the sides of which straggled a thin growth of sandy hair.

In summer he travelled in a canoe, with a big, intelligent dog which he had educated to haul the boat by the tracking line when conditions permitted. When the wind was fair he hoisted a sail; when it was ahead he went ashore and camped until it changed. He was fond of proclaiming that he had been head coachman and a great personal friend of the King of Bavaria and the Crown Prince, and that they had both come to the boat to shake hands with him when he left Germany and tell him to come back soon. Now you have a picture of Dutch Henry.

The Athabasca was in flood, and it would have been difficult for anyone to make his way past the rapids extending for eighty-five miles above the fort, so I told Dutch Henry he might remain at the post

until the water had subsided. He stowed his furs carefully away under the counter in the store and proceeded to make himself at home.

It was a Sunday, a hot, sultry day, and the mosquitoes and bull-dogs were ferocious. I wished to cross to my garden on an island opposite the post, but before doing so made a smudge for the horses. Then I paddled over.

I had been working in the garden only a few minutes when a small whirlwind swept past me. I paid it no particular attention but continued weeding until a loud explosion startled me, and looking up I saw a thick column of smoke rising above the post. I jumped into the canoe and hurried back.

I was climbing the bank when Dutch Henry, his precious bundle of furs under his arm, tore past me. I did not stop or speak to him, for the store was in flames, and I saw that nothing could save it.

The wind now blew a gale and I was alone, my men, as already mentioned, having gone to Chippewyan for supplies. Everything about the place was as dry as tinder, and for four hours the only stops I made in my frantic efforts to stamp out the fires which started in all directions were to get my breath, mop my brow and swear at Dutch Henry for his failure to come to my aid.

At length the fires were under control, and I started for the river for a pail of water to drown my thirst. In passing a clump of willows near the bank an anguished groan from their depths reached my ears. I turned aside and peered in. And here I discovered Dutch Henry.

He was a weird sight. His hair, eyebrows and whiskers were gone, his eyes tight closed, and his round pink face swollen out of all semblance to that of a human being. His nose though short was still visible—a small red ball just discernible in the middle of his bulging cheeks.

I don't believe I am callous; I sincerely pitied him, but—I couldn't help it—I howled. His appearance was too comical. It would have made a mummy laugh.

I led him to the house and did what was in my power to alleviate his sufferings, but ten days had passed before he could use his eyes or get about again. What had happened was this:

The store had been temporarily roofed with pine bark. When the whirlwind passed it caught up a live coal from the smudge and dropped it on the roof. A few days before I had knocked in the head of a keg of gunpowder and, so that it should be out of the way of danger from the pipes of my customers, carried it to the loft over the store and placed it under the roof. Dutch Henry, of course, knew nothing about this keg of powder.

The coal was burning into the roof and Dutch Henry, chancing to look up, noticed it. He ran for a ladder, placed it against the eaves and, in his hand a rope attached to a pail of water on the ground, mounted. He was crawling toward the danger spot and on the point of hauling up the pail when the coal burned through and dropped into the loft below.

At that instant, with a stunning roar, the roof

beneath the astounded German bulged upward and yawned wide, giving him a fleeting glimpse of the infernal regions; then, as he told me afterward, amidst a sea of fire, smoke and hurtling rafters, he was, as it seemed, sailing on and on through unending space.

However, Dutch Henry eventually of course reached the ground somewhere in the vicinity, and remembering his furs, rushed into the store for the treasured bundle. His seared face had not yet had time to swell; he could still see. He was racing for the river to plunge his tortured features in the cool water when I met him.

Besides the store the squared logs I had ready for the new house were destroyed. To reconstruct the store and finish the other buildings kept me fully occupied the remainder of that summer and the following winter, but by next spring all was completed and we had a comfortable post.

The country about Fort McMurray was rich in both game and fur-bearing animals, and I hunted quite often, chiefly for beaver, of which I killed a large number. One night I set two traps for foxes, and next morning, to my surprise, found a silver fox in each, a thing I never knew happen before or since.

Fort McMurray occupies a flat about a mile long and in places a quarter wide, the upper part prairie, the rest covered with poplar and a few jackpine. The soil is a rich loose loam on solid limestone. Almost any vegetable that grows along the Saskatchewan may be raised, but apart from this flat the country is not adapted for farming. The hills

surrounding the flat are seven to eight hundred feet high, and at the top muskegs stretch for miles.

Down the Clearwater, the tributary of the Athabasca at the forks of which is Fort McMurray, from Portage la Loche at its head for eighty or ninety miles and for an equal distance down the Athabasca, tar oil oozes from the banks. Along the shores in cold weather it is hard and looks like gray rock. On warm days it becomes soft and might be cut with a knife. At a few places the tar flows quite freely, and the Hudson's Bay Company collected all they required for their boats in the North. The crude product is boiled to evaporate the oil, when it becomes the best of tar. It is formed from an oil running west and north through coal beds.

At points between McMurray and Chippewyan a limited area of good land may be found, but from McMurray along the Clearwater to Portage la Loche, none at all. The valley of this river, however, is heavily wooded with spruce timber, but once on the hills the country is muskeg "everlasting and eternal" on both sides for miles.

From McMurray up the main stream of the Athabasca for eighty-five miles the current is extremely swift and broken by rapids, some of them difficult. The river flows almost due east to the post and then turns suddenly north, the Clearwater coming in almost due east, with two islands of solid limestone at the mouth. These islands formed at that time three channels, though this feature became changed in the spring of 1875 in a manner to be told later.

Some fifteen miles south-east of the post and almost on the surface I discovered a bed of salt.

Two small bands of Chippewyans and Crees, totalling sixteen or eighteen hunters, traded at the post, but from these few people I always secured forty to forty-five ninety-pound packs of fine furs in the course of a winter.

XXVI

METHY PORTAGE ADDED TO MY CHARGE

In 1871 the Roman Catholic missionaries at Lac la Biche started to cut a cart road to Fort McMurray, but after spending eleven hundred dollars abandoned the project.

The following year a party under a Hudson's Bay Company officer was sent from Lac la Biche to examine this road. He reached McMurray with the loss of nearly all his horses and reported the route impossible. In the summer of 1873 I was instructed to try to complete the road. I knew it could not be done and refused, but offered to open a way to the Saskatchewan if the matter were left to my discretion.

On receiving permission I went to Cold Lake and made a complete map for a good road, with the estimated cost of construction, and offered to finish it in one season. This offer was not accepted, for the reason that it was thought such a road would enable free traders too easily to get into the North.

From Fort McMurray, on the north side of the

Athabasca, a feasible route could be found, to strike the Peace below Red River, passing through some fine tracts of timber.

One of my hunters had two wives, one old, the other young. When the Roman Catholic bishop, Monseigneur Clut, visited McMurray he told the man he must marry one woman and put away the other. As he had two children by the older woman he kept her and was duly married.

Two months later he came to the post and asked me to write the bishop and inform him that he had taken the wrong woman, but had corrected his error by replacing the older wife with the younger. The bishop, he thought, could not object as he still had but one wife. I declined to interfere, telling the man he might explain the matter when next he met the bishop. The attempt to explain to his lordship must have been amusing if ineffectual, for he had promptly to take back the first wife.

After my return from the excursion to Cold Lake I received instructions to examine the river from Fort McMurray to Fort Smith and make a map of it. I left with a large canoe and four men.

I found, between McMurray and Lake Athabasca, one hundred and eighty-five miles, the shallowest water eight and a half feet at the lowest stage of the river. For the nine miles across the lake it was deep. Between the lake and Fort Smith, one hundred and ten miles, I encountered only one shoal in the channel of the Peace, a ridge of rock not more than twelve or fifteen feet wide. A channel might easily be blasted through this ridge. The rest of

the distance might be run by large vessels, even at low water.

I also surveyed a thirteen-mile portage past the rapids on the Peace below Fort Smith. Below these rapids extends clear open navigation for large screw steamers to the Arctic Sea.

In the spring of 1874, while retaining charge of Fort McMurray, I had added to my supervision the freighting of all returns and supplies across the twelve-mile Methy Portage. The outfits for Athabasca, Peace River, Mackenzie River and the Yukon all passed here, as well as all the furs, caribou tongues, leather, etc., traded during the previous year. While the brigades were crossing I was kept busy ; checking cargoes as they arrived, apportioning loads for the boats, reporting on the condition of cargoes. The boats from Hudson Bay, Red River, Cumberland and Green Lake brought goods from the south ; those from Peace River, Peel River, Mackenzie River and Athabasca brought furs. I crossed the portage frequently three and sometimes four times a day, receiving and dispatching brigades north and south.

The winter of 1874-5 was a bitter one, with deep snow and never a thaw until April. On the 2nd or 3rd of that month, however, a further heavy fall of snow was followed by a sudden rise in temperature. The change of weather and weight of the melting snow caused the ice for the eighty-five-mile stretch of rapids above the fort to break up, and it came down the Athabasca with terrific force. On striking the turn in the stream at the post it blocked the river and drove the ice two miles up the Clearwater in

piles forty or fifty feet high. In less than an hour the water rose fifty-seven feet, flooding the whole flat and mowing down trees, some three feet in diameter, like grass.

Fortunately, the spur of the hill just above the fort sloped to the river, forming an eddy. The flood caught only one of the houses, but this was at once swept away. When the water had mounted almost to the bank I ordered everyone back to the high ground, but fearing that if the rise reached the house its contents would be damaged, I stayed behind and, shutting the doors, commenced to carry what articles I could to the upper rooms.

Presently I noticed water trickling in under the doors. I was too much occupied, however, to take the time to look out, until a large tree dashed in at the window. I knew now that I was in for a cold bath. After I had with great difficulty got out of the trap a hundred yards of water five to ten feet deep still separated me from dry land. When, at times wading and again swimming, I at length reached it and safety no one with ague ever shook harder than did I after my ducking.

We cleared away the snow and made a comfortable camp, and here we remained for five days before we could re-occupy the houses. Out of thirty-seven oxen used for the transport service one only escaped. The rest were drowned.

The lack of these oxen would upset the whole transport arrangements and cause an immense loss in time and money. I therefore determined to have them replaced if possible without delaying to

unwind a lot of red tape through reporting to headquarters and awaiting instructions. Taking four men, each with his blanket and gun on his back, I made a bee line for Lac la Biche, the nearest post in the Saskatchewan District. Here I found one of our old officers, Mr. W. E. Traill, in charge, and with his assistance bought every available horse or ox capable of hauling a cart and started for home with my purchases.

We had a heart-breaking return trip, wading through snow and water to our knees and crossing creeks and rivers swollen to their banks. The journey to Lac la Biche took seven days, the return to McMurray thirteen. An additional three days found us at Methy Portage. Two days later the first brigade arrived and the situation was thus neatly saved.

I sent in a full report to headquarters, upon which "the powers that be," so far from finding fault, gave me two promotions instead of one, rewarding Mr. Traill also with one promotion for backing me up.

I remained in charge of Fort McMurray and the transport at Methy Portage until the 1st of March, 1878. On the previous day I had received a letter from Chief Factor R. McFarlane, head of the Athabasca District, informing me that Donald Ross, the officer lately in charge of Fort Vermilion and the lower Peace River, had died shortly after New Year, and that since then the community had been like a flock without a shepherd. Everything had gone wrong. The hunters had left, the people both at Vermilion and Red River were starving, and he

implored me to go up and see what could be done to remedy matters.

Making all arrangements for carrying on the routine at Fort McMurray in my absence, and leaving my clerk, James Spencer, in charge, I started with my dogs and reached Red River on the 11th of March. The fort is built at the mouth of the river on a bank of limestone some eighteen feet high. As I neared the landing a voice from above reached me, enquiring anxiously :

" My God, Moberly, have you any fish or grub to spare ? "

I looked up. The clerk in charge, with his whole flock—men, women and children—stood on the bank. It may sound heartless, but their appearance was so woebegone and solicitous that I had to drop on to my sled to laugh.

" This," I informed them when at last I had recovered my speech, " is the first time I ever saw a flock of pelicans in winter watching for fish from the bank of a river."

After a hasty meal I left for Fort Vermilion, fifty miles above. About half way I came upon the camp of a Wood Cree Indian. I knew him to be a good hunter, though of an awkward temper but very susceptible to flattery. After another meal with him I turned to the man and said :

" I want you to come in to Vermilion three days from now with two moose."

" Do you think I keep moose tied to trees or in my lodge ? " he answered surlily.

" Keewatin," I replied, " when you go after

moose you do not need to find them tied. Once you are on their tracks, they know they cannot escape from such a mighty hunter. So they just lie down and wait for you to come up."

Three days later Keewatin arrived with three moose noses and tongues, and told me where to find the carcases. As the spot was as close to Red River as to Vermilion I sent word to the clerk there to haul in two while my men went for the third.

Making Keewatin a present, I appointed him head hunter for Red River, telling him to let me know when he was unable to feed my men, and I would place him on the list of old and useless Indians, but that for a few years I should not trouble myself about the lower post. For the next five years there was never a shortage of meat at Red River.

I found when I arrived at Vermilion affairs there badly demoralized. With thirty-five souls to feed nothing remained in the fort but a little barley. Next morning I went out with five men and showed them how to hunt beaver in the winter time. Of the five we killed that day I sent four to the fort. In the three days I remained to hunt we got sixty-four of the animals. This, with the moose killed by Keewatin, gave us a good start. I next sent for the Beaver Indians camped at Hay River, four days' journey away, and while I remained in charge, or until September, 1886, we always had a plentiful supply of fresh meat at Fort Vermilion.

XXVII

I GO EAST ON FURLOUGH AFTER THIRTY-THREE YEARS

During my stay at Vermilion the Hudson's Bay Company had strong opposition. A firm of American traders, the Elmore Company, had established themselves in the district. They had plenty of capital, goods to the value of about $20,000, and considerable experience in the business.

I determined to recover the trade for the Hudson's Bay Company. Five years later, the last day I was in charge of the post, they offered to sell out at twenty-five cents on the dollar. Their stocks could have been obtained for about $5,000, but my successor, advised by the chief inspector, did not accept their offer. They consequently extended their operations to Mackenzie River, and a year or two afterward, on advice of the same chief inspector, sold out to the Hudson's Bay Company for $53,000. Up to that time free traders were unknown in the Mackenzie River District, and had the management continued in the hands of old experienced officers it would no doubt still have been a long time before the Hudson's Bay Company met with any opposition in that part of the country.

When the Beaver Indians heard of my arrival at Vermilion they came in with furs to trade. I engaged from among them three hunters for the post and a couple of their young men as meat-haulers. Within a week they were bringing in fresh meat, while the regular work of the post—chiefly the building of new boats—went on uninterruptedly.

In my time at Vermilion we grew all the potatoes and vegetables required for our own use, besides a quantity of barley intended mainly for the summer boat service. This we ground in a horse-power mill. At both the Anglican Mission a mile or so below the fort and the Roman Catholic Mission a few hundred yards above it they always grew plenty of vegetables.

Some distance from the river on the north side the Caribou Mountains form the height of land between the waters falling into the Peace River on the south and those flowing into Great Slave Lake and Hay River on the north. On some of the small streams running south I found colours of gold, and heard that prospectors had also panned gold on those running north.

Learning from the Indians that they had observed fish bones on the shores of a lake on the crest of the Caribou Mountains, I one day put the truth of the report to the test, as it seemed remarkable that fish should be found in a lake at such an altitude, with neither inlet nor outlet to other waters but a small creek tumbling over the rocks.

Taking with me one man, some nets and a few

boards out of which to make a punt, I climbed to the top. I found the lake over five miles long by a mile wide, very deep and filled with salmon-trout, white and jackfish and suckers. But I was even more surprised to find fresh-water herring, for I know of no other lake in the North-west to contain them.

Just before reaching the lake we came upon a splendid caribou stag lying down. I shot him before he could get out of range, and he proved one of the finest specimens I ever saw. Caribou were plentiful on this mountain, which is extensive both in length and breadth. It is capped by a muskeg plain, jack-pine here and there, and the lake just mentioned.

While at Vermilion I made two spring trips which I think were the hardest and most dangerous I have ever undertaken in the North Country.

The first was in the spring of 1884. I left the post on the 30th of March with one man and a train of dogs. Up till this time the winter had prevailed without a break, but the day after our start a change came and it thawed day and night. For miles at a stretch we travelled knee-deep in snow and water. Then in places the ice began to move, which compelled us to pick up a bark canoe and carry it along. When the river was open for a space we ferried the dogs and ourselves across. The canoe being small we were obliged to make five or six trips each time we encountered open water. The farther up the river we progressed the more open places we met. Travelling, of course, was slow, and every day the ice

became worse. At the mouth of the Smoky and the head of the Lesser Slave Lake trail we found we were following on a narrow ridge of ice in the middle of the river, that along the shores having melted or drifted away. Being bound for Lesser Slave Lake we were only too glad to reach the bank. And none too soon, for in another hour all the ice was carried off.

Owing to the length of time we had been on the road we were now out of provisions. A small untenanted log house stood on the bank at the forks, a building maintained as a Hudson's Bay Company depot for supplies consigned to posts up the Smoky River. The doors were locked, but necessity knowing no law I made a false key with which we secured entrance. Here we found flour and lard and baked some bannocks. Next day we started afoot for Lesser Slave Lake, seventy-five miles distant. I obtained the supplies we had come for and we started back with carts. When we reached the river summer appeared to have arrived, neither snow nor ice being visible. We made a large raft and expected to have smooth sailing on the run down.

All went well until ten o'clock of the second night. It was pitch dark, and we were nearing the mouth of Cadotte River, the rapids being plainly audible, when I told my man I would snatch a couple of hours' sleep before taking my turn on watch.

Luckily, disturbed by the sound of the rapids, sleep eluded me. We appeared so long in passing the mouth of the Cadotte that I arose at length,

only to find that we were in the midst of a field of ice and not moving at all. We hurried ashore and tied up the raft, deciding to await daylight to reveal our situation. Two hours later, with a terrific noise, the water began to rush like a mill race. We had run into an ice-jam, the jam had burst, and morning disclosed our raft high and dry. To float the raft and prepare for a fresh start took us the whole day. Twice more before reaching Vermilion we ran into ice-jams, but by good luck got safely home.

The second trip to which I have referred was made next spring.

I received a letter from the chief factor at Fort Chippewyan, asking me if possible to come down to see him on important business. This letter was brought to me on the 31st of March, and I left the following day. We had had no warm weather, and the snow was still as dry as in mid-winter.

That night a warm west wind blew up and it commenced to thaw steadily. Before I reached Chippewyan the snow had gone and the ice on the lakes was covered with water. My stay at the post was limited to one night, and I started on my return. The trail kept to the ice of two lakes for about seventy-five miles, then followed a portage of thirty-five miles overland to the Peace River, and ice for the remaining forty miles to Red River post.

When we reached the Peace the ice was still solid in the middle, but along either shore the water ran swiftly. To enable us to reach the trail on this centre ice we felled a large pine tree for an improvised

bridge. During the whole of that day's travel we failed to find a place where we could make the shore. The sky was clouded, a drizzling rain fell, and it was impossible for us with any certainty to judge the ice.

I was ahead on snowshoes when I dropped suddenly through. In the rapid current, and until my man could throw me a line, I was forced to exert myself to the utmost to avoid being drawn under by my snowshoes. Once safely on the ice again I saw that we by some means and immediately must land. We went to the solid edge, and when a block of floating ice large enough to carry us both came past we jumped aboard, and using our snowshoes as paddles at length reached shore thirty miles below Red River post, cold, wet and miserable. Driftwood was plentiful on the bank and we soon were drying ourselves before a huge fire, and a little later sat down to eat our last remaining food.

I had six small charges for my gun in my powder horn, and just before dark bagged two mallards with one shot. Early next morning I shot a beaver, and in the evening another. We now had plenty of meat, with three charges of powder remaining. We reached Red River, stopped over night and then struck across country for Fort Vermilion, fifty miles away. Ducks were numerous, and crossing a swamp I killed a large black bear. The weather when we arrived at Vermilion was already like summer, and the ground being free of frost we proceeded at once to put in our seed.

I remained in charge of Vermilion until September,

1886, when I took a six-months' furlough to visit my friends in Eastern Canada after an absence of thirty-three years in the wilds of the North-west. During that time there had been two halfbreed risings in the prairie country, but the West is so vast and I had been so much farther north that I had scarcely heard of them.

XXVIII

WOLVES, MOOSE AND BEARS

When the buffalo were numerous coyotes swarmed on the plains. These small wolves could not kill any animal larger than a rabbit, but lived on the carcases left by the improvident hunters. Mice and gophers were also a standby for them, though when they encountered a wounded or blind buffalo he was soon brought down and devoured. Now, though still in considerable number, they are by no means so numerous as formerly. Alone, they are unable to kill a sheep but will play havoc among domestic fowls; joined by one of the larger species, however, they will kill sheep and sometimes young calves.

The larger timber wolf will pull down almost any animal existing in the country. These wolves do not, as some imagine, spring at the neck, but fasten their teeth in the sinews of the hind leg and then throw themselves down. Before they are drawn any distance the sinews break, the animal is hamstrung and sinks to the ground.

When more than one are in pursuit of an animal, some run ahead and on either side to worry the beast until one behind, usually a seasoned veteran, gets a grip. Except when starving they are a

cowardly lot and if faced will run away. They are still numerous in remote parts of the North-west Territories, more particularly where caribou are plentiful. They do not, as a rule, travel in large packs, but in March, the breeding season, collect together in great numbers.

I twice fell in with these packs.

On one occasion I had been on a trip to a Chippewyan camp and had traded a quantity of furs, leather and provisions. The dogs being too heavily laden to do the distance between the camp and McMurray in a day, I had started in the night alone, intending to make the fort by the following evening. I had a long stretch through thick woods to travel before reaching the river, and presently became aware of numerous fresh tracks which I at first took to be those of caribou, until it occurred to me that this was not a caribou country. On striking a light I saw at once that I was among a pack of wolves which were circling about me.

I did not much relish the situation, for I had with me no weapon more formidable than my pocket-knife. With this, however, I cut a club, and now and then as I proceeded lit my pipe. As I did so I fancied I saw forms flitting ahead and behind me, but I at length reached the river, when seven wolves trotted out on the ice before me. With a loud yell I started after them. Evidently they had not counted on an attack, for they lost no time in crossing to the opposite shore. The others dared not follow, but contented themselves with howling from the bank and I saw no more of them.

Horses, when we kept them, were frequently killed by wolves on the Peace River and in the mountains, and I am afraid they will do great damage to the settlers' stock when deer become scarce and the wolves hungry. The situation is likely to become as bad as in Russia or as it was in France before the wolves were exterminated.

The Chippewyan Indians will kill a wolf, but owing to some superstition never skin one, and thus many a fine robe is lost.

Once at Fort Resolution a wolf was seen between the stable and the house. Mr. Swanston, the clerk in charge, went out with his gun, but the animal was entering the woods and Mr. Swanston did not follow him. Shortly afterward a little ten-year-old girl went down the bank for a kettle of water. The wolf followed her, but before he could attack the child the big train dogs at the fort caught sight of the prowler and rushed upon him in time to save the girl's life. The wolf was literally torn to pieces.

I had often in Eastern Canada read and heard of a bull moose, when wounded or otherwise, charging a hunter. In all my experience in the North-west I never saw it done or knew of an Indian who had. I have wounded and followed a moose until close to him—sometimes have actually driven him toward a good spot for a camp. I have run them down on snowshoes, yet I never saw one that did not make every effort to escape.

On one occasion during the mating season I was coming down the Peace River at a favourite point for moose when I saw a number of them on a high

bank. On approaching closer I discovered them to be four large bulls disputing possession of a cow standing not far away. The wind was blowing toward me, and I was able to come within twenty yards, when I dropped the cow with my right barrel and one of the bulls with my left. The remaining bulls looked at me for a moment, but disappeared before I could reload.

On several occasions I have approached a bull moose and cow, have killed the cow, and the bull has made off so quickly that I could not fire a second shot.

One morning at daylight I started for a short run on Peace River to see if I could not bag either a moose or a bear. I was accompanied by an Irishman known as "Paddy from Cork," without exception the greenest specimen I ever met from the Emerald Isle. He was another of the quaint characters who had drifted into the North-western wilderness in those early days, and often stayed with me. He was good company, could sing a song, tell tales of banshees, ghosts and other creatures of that ilk, and was welcome wherever he hung his hat.

On rounding a point I saw by the still-wet marks on the stones that two moose had just landed. Warning Paddy to keep quiet I went to the edge of the woods and sighted a bull moose about fifteen yards to my left. Presently I located the cow a little to the right. Standing behind a large poplar I waited for her to cross an opening, when I should first draw a bead on her and then use the other barrel on the bull, which was calling now and again to his mate.

Paddy saw the bull, he saw me leaning with

apparent indifference on my gun behind the tree: he was all excitement—he couldn't make it out.

"Be jabers," he shouted, "why don't ye shoot that foine moose forninst ye?"

To an accompaniment of the sound of crashing branches, the moose were off like a flash to regions where no Irishman could alarm them. This particular Irishman, you may be sure, heard some fairly strong language.

When a moose is started it invariably runs in a circle to get the wind of whatever has roused it. If the scent is of man it goes down the wind for a long distance before it is assured it is not being followed.

Speaking of Paddy reminds me of another occasion upon which we hunted in company.

Early one morning I took my hunting canoe and started up the Peace with the idea of getting a bear. I told the Irishman to follow with a dugout to bring back the game in case I killed. I landed at the foot of a small island where I knew the abundance of berries would have been likely to prove alluring to bruin, and as I expected, found and killed a black bear.

I crossed over in the canoe and saw Paddy approaching in the dugout. An old train dog, blind of an eye and deaf, was following opposite him along the bank, here ten or twelve feet high. Accompanied by her cub and coming down the bank, no doubt with the purpose of crossing to the island, I sighted at the same instant a large female grizzly. Immediately I became possessed with the desire to see what would happen when dog, grizzly and Irishman met, and I lay down to watch the spectacle.

The bear first saw the dog, reared on her hind legs and gave voice to a savage growl. The dog turned tail and fled precipitately, or at least as fast as age and his physical handicaps would permit. Paddy looked up, threw his hand in the air with a terrified yell and dropped his paddle on the water. The bear and her cub about-faced and walked back into the woods.

The dugout turned away from the shore in the current and began floating with the helpless Irishman off downstream.

"Why don't ye kill that big baste and come and get me paddle?" he cried plaintively, his blue eyes wide with fright, while I lay on the bank and roared. But I went to his rescue at last. Cheerful, incompetent Paddy from Cork! I think of him often. Many a laugh he gave me. Wherever he went I'm sure he never was anything but happy.

Some time ago I read a book written by an old hunter who had roamed extensively in Keewatin and Northern Ontario. He tells of travelling with some companions and finding a bear in a big log. Getting leverage on the beast with a pole, one of the men pried him out. The other two then killed the animal "before he had recovered from his torpor."

So far as I can recall I have found thirteen black or brown bears in their dens, but never saw one that did not become wide awake on being disturbed, although in cold weather it is sometimes necessary to smoke them out. Killing a bear while in its den is, however, poor policy, for it is a most difficult job for one man to pull a large bear out of his hole.

On one occasion on the Nechaco I found three bears in one den, a female, a two- and a one-year-old. In every other instance—all along the foothills of the Rockies near the Peace—there was but one. Of grizzlies, I have found six in their dens, and assuredly none asleep. A noise at the mouths of their retreats brought them out instantly; rather, they tried to come, for I never let them get more than head and shoulders above ground.

One old grizzly I came upon some time after New Year was not in a den at all, but curled up under the root of a fallen tree. As soon as he heard me he did his best to reach me, but the snow was deep and I was on snowshoes; the danger, therefore, was not great. When he had approached close enough I shot him.

Indians have told me this happens often with grizzlies.

When the buffalo were plentiful grizzlies were numerous on the plains, but since their disappearance these bears have seldom been encountered far from mountains or timber.

As far down as Red River on the Peace an odd one is occasionally met with. From Dunvegan to the Rockies, however, and in the mountains themselves, they are still to be found.

In the mountains bears frequently hunt the marmots and are generally in groups of three to five. They dig the little animals out, one bear taking a position at each opening of the marmots' den, and when they arrive the marmot family makes an appetizing morsel for them.

In British Columbia when the salmon come up the bears live high on the small creeks. They go into the water, throw the fish out on the bank and then feast at their leisure. This can only be done when the streams are low. At that season bears are numerous on all the creeks.

In the spring of 1869 berries of all kinds were a failure owing to late frosts, and the bears were starving. It was by no means uncommon then for one bear to kill another.

If extremely hungry I have no doubt a black bear might attack a man.

XXIX

I CONCLUDE MY WANDERINGS AND SETTLE DOWN

Leaving Vermilion, as I have said, for a visit East, I went by steamboat down the Peace to Fort Chippewyan, and on by the Athabasca and Clearwater Rivers to Methy Portage; thence down the Churchill to Isle a la Crosse and up the Beaver River to Green Lake, from which place I drove to Prince Albert.

And what a change in that country since I had last seen it in 1861! Then, from Fort Qu'Appelle to the Rockies, the only buildings were the groups about a few isolated trading posts; buffalo in thousands still roamed the prairies; the redmen were a free, wild people; the Hudson's Bay Company alone administered the law; travel was entirely by open boats on the lakes and streams, and with horses, carts or dog-sleds on the prairies; railroads had not been dreamed of. Now, Prince Arthur's Landing—the original name—was an important town; the buffalo had gone; the plains were dotted with farms; Atlantic and Pacific were linked by the Canadian Pacific Railway; a railroad to Prince Albert was projected. The rule of the Hudson's Bay Company had given place to the regular laws of the Dominion,

administered by that splendid force known as the North-West Mounted Police. The Indians were confined to reserves—no more war parties, no battles between the different tribes. A change indeed from "the good old days!"

After a short stay at Prince Albert I drove across country to Qu'Appelle, where I took a train to Winnipeg. I saw my family comfortably settled in the Manitoban capital before proceeding by rail to Port Arthur, thence by steamer to Owen Sound, on to Orangeville, to Allandale and to Collingwood, looking up old friends. But Ontario was not the country I had known. When I first left the province I believed it a land of big trees and broad farms—in fact, a grand country generally. Now I saw farms with stones heaped about the fences, stones still covering the fields, and stumps everywhere. Where were all the big trees? They seemed to have become smaller; in sooth, everything appeared shrunken and petty after the boundless plains and mighty peaks, the silent valleys and the towering firs, to which I had become accustomed.

But if the farms seemed to my western view to have dwindled, the towns plainly had forged ahead. In 1854 Barrie had a population of perhaps four hundred, Toronto forty thousand, Collingwood was a small village, Allandale not on the map, though the grade of the Northern Railway had just reached its site. Now Toronto had one hundred and forty thousand people, Allandale was a prosperous settlement, the Northern Railway an ancient concern, Collingwood and Barrie were thriving towns.

After a few days spent in these localities I sailed for England, where I enjoyed a pleasant winter with my two sisters.

I was surprised to find how little knowledge the people at home as a rule possessed regarding the extent and character of Canada. Down in Wales a lady enquired if I would kindly take a parcel for her son, and on my asking for his address gave it as "eight miles from the C.P.R. west of Winnipeg."

On another occasion, one of the larger shareholders of the Hudson's Bay Company enquired why we did not export frozen fish from Great Slave, Great Bear and all the other lakes, to supply the European markets. The Governor, Lord Strathcona, with a smile and a glance toward where a friend and myself sat, replied that the only reason he knew was lack of means of transportation.

"But," rejoined the shareholder, "you have the Canadian Pacific Railway."

"True," said the Governor, "but it would be necessary to build a number of branches, some probably longer than the Canadian Pacific itself."

Numbers of young Englishmen coming out in those days with the intention of settling on the land spent their money before starting on an equipment of guns, revolvers, bowie knives, saddlery and other non-essentials, in the belief that fighting Indian war-parties and cowboy desperadoes would be all in the day's work. Once settled they were glad to sell all this expensive paraphernalia for what it would bring, whereas if they had placed their spare cash in a bank and brought with them nothing but a change of

clothes and a will to work, their money would have been available for the purchase of the indispensable needs of the settler.

Another mistake to be avoided is affecting the dress and ways of the "wild and woolly West" as set forth in certain novels. This practice not only subjects them to ridicule but often militates against their chance of obtaining employment. In the Canadian North-west provinces any man, no matter what his upbringing or former station in life, can get on, provided he acts on the square and is willing to learn. He is judged by his own manner of life. The highest positions are open to anyone with the necessary ability and the willingness to work for them.

I returned to Canada in the spring and reported for duty at Winnipeg on 1st May, 1887. After a month in Winnipeg the Commissioner asked me to go to Stanley, where the Company was encountering stout opposition. I crossed Lake Winnipeg to the Grand Rapids and thence journeyed by York boat to Stanley, where I remained two years, at the end of which time Stobart and Company sold out and abandoned the place.

Stanley is situated on the Churchill River, five miles from the north end of Lac la Ronge. The lake is some fifty miles long and in places five wide, with numerous islands from end to end. These islands are chiefly rock and highly mineralized, containing gold, silver, copper and nickel. Like deposits are found everywhere in the territory about the lake and on the Churchill, and only lack transportation facilities to become enormously valuable. If the

Hudson Bay Railway branch from Prince Albert to Fort Churchill be once built it will pass at no great distance from Lac la Ronge and through a section of this mineral belt.

Stanley was one of the most important posts in Cumberland District. The Indians trading there comprised a band of Chippewyans, some Wood Crees and a number of halfbreeds.

Lac la Ronge abounds in white and jackfish, trout and suckers. It is connected by the Rabbit River, five miles in length, with the Churchill. Moose and caribou, bear, fisher, lynx, marten, mink, otter and other game and furbearing animals were plentiful.

In 1889, having again concluded to retire from the service in the spring of the following year, I sent in my resignation. After the brigade left I took a canoe and went up the Montreal River to ascertain if it were a feasible route by which to bring in outfits via Prince Albert. On my arrival at Montreal Lake I received a letter from the Chief Commissioner, requesting me to come to Winnipeg as soon as possible. Accordingly I went to Prince Albert and Saskatoon, where I found a construction train on its way to Regina. At this time the rails had been laid to within a few miles of Duck Lake and most of the grading had been done to Prince Albert.

On my arrival at Winnipeg Chief Commissioner Wrigley asked me to take charge of Isle a la Crosse District and try to put it on its feet. Free traders had overrun the locality, the servants were unreliable —"In fact," said he, "everything has gone to the devil."

I replied that it would take two or three years to recover our lost ground and that I was leaving the service in the spring. I was induced finally to go to Isle a la Crosse for three years, on the understanding that if I made a success of it I should receive further promotion. The Commissioner assured me that, so far as lay in his power, I could depend on being advanced another step in the service, which is graded similarly to that of the army, though on a system distinctive to the Company.

This from a man in his position I accepted as equal to a guarantee from the Governor and Committee at home. I therefore withdrew my resignation, and after two days in Winnipeg started back by the route I had come. On my arrival at Stanley I went by boat up the Churchill to Isle a la Crosse, and on September 1st took over the charge of the district.

My first step was to dismiss the ringleaders among the refractory servants, letting the rest understand that I would tolerate no insubordination. I next visited the outposts to put them in order, and then turned my attention to the opposition. By the end of 1891 Isle a la Crosse District was clear of free traders, and the influence of the Hudson's Bay Company was established on as firm a basis as ever. I continued in charge for some months after my term of three years had expired.

Meanwhile, however, Mr. Wrigley had resigned as Chief Commissioner. Not having received my promised promotion I wrote the new Commissioner, reciting the conditions upon which I had been induced to remain in the service. His answer was

that he could not recognize a verbal promise made by a predecessor.

I at once sent in my resignation. The word of a Hudson's Bay Company officer had always been considered as binding, even through his successor, and this policy of the Company was one of the main sources of that remarkable influence which enabled them to rule so wild a country for over two centuries with so few men.*

In the spring of 1894 I left the service for good and settled at Macdowall, on the Canadian National line to Regina, eighteen miles south of Prince Albert.

* * * * * *

Tremendous indeed have been the changes in the old North-west since I first rode over it in 1854. Then the woods commenced three miles from Fort a la Corne, and, with the exception of a small fringe along the river banks and larger lakes, the rest of the country was open prairie. Now, owing to the prevention of bush fires since settlement began, the wooded country reaches as far as Duck Lake, eighty miles west of Fort a la Corne. Formerly these fires caught from those on the prairie, which originated chiefly through war parties setting the grass alight to cover their tracks; while every traveller who saw a fire moving in his direction immediately started another, to meet it and save himself a scorching, by "back-firing."

* Mr. Moberly wishes it understood that, while through the attitude of an individual advancement rightfully his due was withheld, nothing in what has been said is intended as a reflection upon the Company, which as an organization treated him over his term of service with uniform fairness and consideration.

One of the most thrilling and most terrifying sights of those early days was the stampede of a vast herd of buffalo before a prairie fire. Woe to the man unable to get out of the way of that wild charge! Whip and spur were used without stint or mercy whenever we were thus involved to leave them an open road, for the buffalo on stampede were far more dangerous than the fire itself.

All this has passed. The prairie has been ploughed into farms. Railroads have displaced the trails of the Red River carts. Cities, towns and villages cluster round the sites of the trading posts. The old, free West is no more. The buffalo, save for a few enclosed by fences, have perished from the face of the earth. And I, though vigorous still, am an "old-timer."

Tempus fugit!

Yes, and in Western Canada as nowhere in the wide world else.

PART II

I

KOOMINAKOOS, WARRIOR

War, as practised by the redman, was not, from the civilized viewpoint at least, an attractive pursuit. It was perhaps even more diabolical in its limited way than that waged recently on a broader and therefore ghastlier scale by certain supposedly-enlightened nations in Europe. With the Indian on the warpath primitive passions held sway. He was out to kill and usually had no compunction as to methods. Woe betide the enemy who by any dark mischance fell within his power! He might be alone and pitted against a hundred of his foes, but that mercy would be shown him never entered his brain. It was practically an unknown quality. The rare exception that proved the rule was in the case of a warrior whose unparalleled bravery excited the admiration of his captors. The Indian in his martial activities was utterly ruthless; the atrocities he committed and the indignities he inflicted upon the persons of his foes, not infrequently while still alive and conscious, would not bear relation in any book.

Between the Crees and the Blackfeet deadly hatred

had endured for farther back than tradition on either side ran, though learned ethnologists tell us the two nations sprang originally from common Algonquin stock. If so, the date of their tribal division must be in the extremely remote past, for it would be difficult to-day to trace any similarity between the two languages. For example, take a few common English words. "No" in Cree is *namoya* and in Blackfoot, *sa*; "good," *mewassin* and *oxi*; "strong," *muskowow* and *skoonataps*; "woman," *isquayo* and *aki*; "come," *astum* and *poxaput*; "go," *keeway* or *macha* and *mistaput*. As recently as 1883 Cree and Blackfoot fought each other, and while the old men of either tribe still delight to boast of their battles and personal prowess, since the settlement by white men of their common domain they have perforce abandoned their hostile activities and their racial feud is rapidly becoming a memory only.

In the 'fifties, however, the story is a different one, and I shall relate a few of their warlike exploits to illustrate the bitterness that prevailed between the tribes when first I came to the country in 1854 and for many years afterward. And I shall commence by dealing with the record of one of the most famous among the many redoubtable warriors of the Crees, because one of the most crafty and resourceful. His name was Koominakoos, and I knew him well.

The Upper Saskatchewan country about Edmonton may be said to have been the home of Koominakoos. Often when he returned from one of his almost uniformly successful raids upon the

Blackfoot territory to the south, he would come to me and recount with much glee the commonly-shocking details of his latest exploit.

Koominakoos was an orphan, his father having been killed in a Blackfoot raid and his mother carried away captive. He had been brought up by his grandmother, an aged widow, in a wretched state of poverty. The boy had known practically none even of the few primitive advantages common to most Indian children and went about barefoot and in rags. With the bow and arrows the old woman made for him he killed gophers and other small animals, and he caught rabbits in snares of sinew, to eke out the scanty fare which the charity of the camp provided for them. He was an object of derision and persecution to his child companions.

But if Koominakoos was shown little affection or consideration, circumstances from the age when he was able to toddle about forced upon him cultivation of the virtues of self-reliance and manliness. And the youngster was ambitious. He would become a great warrior when he grew up. The children who now gibed and laughed at him would be made to respect Koominakoos. They would be proud to serve on any war party of which he took command.

He spent much time in practising with his tiny bows and arrows. As he grew older his grandmother made him a larger and stronger bow and heavier arrows. He became an expert bowman.

He was only eleven when he went on his first war party. The band to which he belonged was in camp near Edmonton, when he wandered one night into

the lodge of a minor chief and listened wide-eyed to a number of warriors discussing plans for a raid. The party would number only half a dozen and would start next day. Koominakoos left the lodge and ran as fast as his short legs would carry him to his grandmother.

"Make me moccasins and a rawhide line to catch horses, and give me my bow and arrows," he demanded. "I shall go with the war party."

The old woman told him he would not be permitted, but did as he asked, and when the war party, travelling afoot, departed in the morning, Koominakoos trailed along, unnoticed, in the rear.

At the first camp, however, the odour of roasting buffalo ribs proved too strong a temptation for the half-starved little boy, and he slipped, his small face bravely painted with vermilion, in among the warriors. They were astonished; half angry, too, and amused.

"Go back!" they told him sternly. "Dog-boy, why have you come here?"

Koominakoos, fighting to check his tears, begged to be allowed to continue, but his plea met only with ridicule. "Go back, before we beat you!" They laughed at him, as the children had done. "What can a boy, brought up by an old woman, know of war? You would only get us in trouble. Go back, *sosquatch*!"

However, Koominakoos was well fed, which after all was what he most had wished. And he did not go back. Instead, when the war party moved again, so did Koominakoos. Keeping out of sight behind

knolls and groves of poplar and willow, he hung on their trail until Blackfoot territory was reached. Meanwhile he lived on gophers, with which his bow and arrows provided him.

The party was resting in some woods along a creek a day or two later, Koominakoos hidden in the bushes nearby, when a scout came in and reported the proximity of a big camp of the enemy, with a herd of many horses. The diminutive warrior listened with a wildly-throbbing heart while they laid their plans. They would raid the enemy camp that night. They would, if possible, avoid alarming the Blackfeet and run off their herd. Koominakoos resolved that he, too, would be there, playing his part.

The fleetest horses in an Indian camp were always tethered at night before the lodges of their owners. There were two reasons for this : first, in the event of a raid, capture of the animals was made particularly hazardous ; second, they were at hand in case of a surprise attack.

The Crees—Koominakoos again unnoticed in the darkness among them—crept on the silent camp and had already cut the lines of many of these tethered horses when the enemy's dogs were aroused, and their barking brought the Blackfeet tumbling in haste out of their lodges. Koominakoos had, by a lucky chance, himself secured the pick of the ponies. The Crees flung themselves on the captured horses and made off in the graying dawn, hotly pursued by a large body of the enemy. They were soon forced to a stand and a furious digging of pits on the plain with their heavy buffalo knives for

protection against the missles of the foe. Koominakoos alone, outdistancing his pursuers on his fast horse, escaped.

The boy galloped on as rapidly as his mount could carry him, and again good fortune smiled on the youngster, for he rode straight into a second and much larger war party of his own tribe. Informing them in a few quick words of the plight of the others, he wheeled and raced back at their head to the succour of the sorely-beset Crees. After a short battle the Blackfeet were driven off.

Thus Koominakoos became the saviour of his first war party, a party he had adopted, since it had refused summarily to adopt him or even consider the possibility of such a step, and a party, moreover, of which—until the warriors properly belonging to it, to their amazement, saw him rushing to their rescue—he had been an unknown member. From that day the boy was never more laughed at by the other children in the camp. He had made his mark.

Six or seven years later Koominakoos disappeared from his accustomed haunts, and it was supposed he had been ambushed and slain. After three years, however, he turned up again at Edmonton, a full-grown man and speaking Blackfoot almost as well as his native Cree. By what means he had succeeded in living during the interval in the camps of his enemies was known only to himself. His knowledge of Blackfoot and his resourcefulness now made him an outstanding figure of his tribe.

Among other of the notable exploits of Koominakoos was the following :

The war party, eight in all, Koominakoos leading, had ranged far into the south country when they stumbled one day upon a band of Blackfeet greatly outnumbering them. Closely pressed, the Crees fought desperately to hold the enemy in check, meanwhile working their way out on a narrow spit of land in a lake several miles long and perhaps half a mile in width. Here the Crees dug pits with their heavy knives and kept the foe at bay until sundown. They looked for the Blackfeet, under cover of darkness, to creep up and overwhelm them in these holes.

Night came, black with clouds. Said Koominakoos:

"Load your guns, all of you, and lay them with the ammunition alongside the pits. Then get into the water, swim the lake and make your way home. I will stop and fight the Blackfeet alone."

The young men were astonished. That their leader had in mind some clever strategic stroke they did not doubt, though how he was himself to escape out of the enemy's toils was a problem to which they could see no answer. However, Koominakoos they trusted and obeyed blindly.

As they disappeared Koominakoos picked up a gun and discharged it at the Blackfeet lines. He ran to one end of the pits, seized another gun and discharged it also; then to the centre and fired a third shot. Next a spurt of flame came from the opposite end of the pits. The guns, all muzzle-loaders, required recharging before they could again be fired. When each in turn had been emptied,

Koominakoos reloaded several and repeated his tactics.

He judged that by this time his followers had reached the opposite shore of the lake.

Now Koominakoos, his head muffled closely in his buffalo robe, left his own pits and moved cautiously forward, circling the end of the Blackfoot line. Presently he entered the first of their pits from the rear. He spoke to the single Blackfoot occupying it in his own tongue.

"I think," said the Cree, "that our enemies must be out of ammunition. They do not fire any more. Soon we shall be able to go over and knock them on the head. But I will fire again and see if they reply."

He raised his gun and a ball whistled across the pits he had recently left. While he reloaded, the Blackfoot levelled and discharged his gun also.

"If we fire several shots," he remarked, "we shall be better able to tell. If they think an attack is coming they will be more likely to answer if they still have ammunition."

Koominakoos's weapon was now recharged, the Blackfoot's empty. Koominakoos turned his gun in the darkness on his enemy.

"You should not waste your ammunition like that," observed Koominakoos. "Often a loaded gun is more useful than an empty one."

Something in Koominakoos's tone caused the Blackfoot to look round quickly. Again there was a spurt of flame and the Blackfoot dropped with a groan.

Koominakoos bent, knife in hand, tore the scalp-lock from his enemy's head and left the pits. Three days later he came into the fort at Edmonton and with many colourful gestures and gloating grimaces told me how he had once more counted coup on the hated foe.

I think it was in '61 that a large party of Blackfeet came into Edmonton from the south to trade. It chanced that at about the same time a band of Crees under Chief Lepotac, Koominakoos among them, had arrived from down-river. The Blackfeet went into camp to the west of the fort and the Crees on the opposite side.

Hostilities, naturally, soon broke out, and for two days Blackfoot and Cree chased and fought each other round the stockade of old Fort Edmonton.

In the course of the fighting an important Blackfoot chief was killed. The Blackfeet were infuriated. They were the larger party and threatened to attack and burn the fort, charging that the Company's men had favoured and protected their enemies. To prevent the mutilation of the dead chief by the Crees, Chief Factor Christie had ordered his men to carry the corpse into the fort. He invited the leading Blackfeet inside and showed them the body of their chief, attired in his finest war-clothes and decently laid out in a coffin.

An aged halfbreed pensioner of the Company had happened to die the day before.

"I will tell the Crees," said the chief factor, "that your chief has been buried inside the fort and that the old halfbreed will be buried outside.

Thus the body of your great warrior will not be disturbed."

By this ruse the Blackfeet were placated and the chief factor succeeded in having a truce declared.

Two coffins had been made, exactly alike, and at midnight both bodies were carried to the hill behind the fort and lowered in a common grave. The old halfbreed's death and the alleged fact that the Blackfoot had been interred inside the stockade had been widely advertised among the Crees.

At ten o'clock next morning Koominakoos, a diabolical grin on his crafty features, stalked into Fort Edmonton. On his back were the gorgeous funeral trappings and tucked in his belt the heavy plaited scalp and hair adornments of the dead Blackfoot chief.

Had Chief Factor William Sinclair been in charge at Edmonton the career of the impudent savage would likely have come to an abrupt and painful end. But Mr. Christie was a different stamp of man. Stern measures did not appeal to him, and he feared offending the Crees as much as he did the Blackfeet. Thus Koominakoos, instead of being shot, was free to give full voice to his unblushing exultation over his ghoulish joke.

A nominal friendship existed between the Crees and the Assiniboines, or Stonies, but it was merely nominal. Little love was lost between the tribes. The Stonies are an offshoot from the Sioux, and with slight local differences speak the same language. They call themselves by the same name, "Dakota," or "Nacota." Like their Siouan kindred they were

a fighting people, and when brought to bay, with no avenue of possible retreat, could undoubtedly die bravely, as those familiar with them know. On the other hand, they were treacherous and bloodthirsty, and when a Cree, travelling or camped alone in some isolated spot, was discovered rigid and mutilated, at the lodge doors of renegade Stonies was responsibility apt to be laid.

However, there was a reason for the tenuous bond between the tribes, and this reason was—the Blackfeet, open enemies of both. In their mutual interest and for their better protection Crees and Stonies frequently camped and occasionally made war together.

The Stonies affected to regard their neighbours as lacking in warrior-like qualities, as cowardly and more ready to run than to fight when battle loomed. They could not, however, ignore the record of a warrior like Koominakoos. They were, in fact, jealous of the Cree and his reputation. Particularly The Horned Thunder.

The Horned Thunder was a Stony war chief who counted many Blackfoot scalps. The Stony had never been on a war party with Koominakoos, though to share that privilege was what he most ardently desired. And at length the gods of the Stonies heard the war chief's plea and his ambition was realized.

Both Crees and Stonies had lost heavily in scalps and horses to the Blackfeet the year before, and they decided something had to be done about it. Their enemies must be given a mauling they would not soon forget.

Thus in the spring the two tribes gathered at the crossing of the Battle River south of Edmonton, and at the big war dance held that night the leaders on both sides bragged of past feats of valour and planned reprisals. At length The Horned Thunder arose.

"The name of Koominakoos," said he, "strikes terror to the hearts of the dog-faces——" here the followers of the Cree beat a salvo on the big drum and shouted in acclaim. "*Toka*, Koominakoos is a great warrior, but in this movement against our enemies The Horned Thunder will show himself to be a greater. I hope we meet the Blackfeet soon. Then, though Koominakoos be in the front of the fight, The Horned Thunder will be before him!"

It was now the Stonies' turn to laud their champion, which they did to the accompaniment of much beating of their own drum.

Koominakoos smiled inscrutably as he listened to the other's speech, but he sat gravely smoking and answered nothing.

A week later the great war party of the allies was in camp beside Willow Creek, which skirts the base of the Hand Hills and runs into the Red Deer River from the south. They were well within the boundaries of the Blackfoot territory, but being so strong in numbers had little fear of attack and had brought with them their women and children.

In the evening a woman went with a pail to the creek for water. She was gone but a few moments, when the warriors were startled by a loud cry—"*The Blackfeet! The Blackfeet!*" and looked up to see the woman, her eyes wide with terror, rushing

into camp. The men flung themselves on their horses and with whips flying dashed down to the creek.

On the open plain across it a single Blackfoot was racing madly toward a tongue of land round the point of which the creek swept in a horseshoe curve at the foot of the Hand Hills. The tip of this spit was thickly wooded. Amid a hail of arrows and bullets from his pursuers the Blackfoot gained and plunged into the grove.

A burst of furious gunfire halted the warriors as they approached the grove. They dismounted and extended to right and left, climbing the hills beyond the poplars and encircling their foes. Then they lighted fires and sat down to smoke and wait until dawn.

The enemy, as the allies learned long afterward, consisted of a small war party of Blackfeet under their noted war chief Iyaksin, or Low Horn. They had come upon a broad trail that afternoon near the Hand Hills and were deceived. They believed it to have been made by halfbreed whisky-traders, or else by their allies the Sarcees. That the Crees or Stonies would venture upon their territory and be so careless as to leave such open evidence of their passing was to the Blackfeet incredible.

However, the astute Iyaksin did not believe in taking things for granted. He left his followers under cover among the poplars and went on alone to learn beyond conjecture the identity of the strangers.

As he reached the creek he looked across and saw

the woman coming toward him, swinging her pail. He crouched behind some bushes and waited. Now the problem would be solved.

Had he exercised his customary caution—had he looked at her dress, the pattern of her moccasins—Iyaksin might have learned what he wished to know without discovering himself. But Iyaksin was not looking at the woman's dress or her moccasins. He looked at her face. The woman was pretty.

He sprang out to seize her wrist, to clap a hand over her mouth. His foot slipped in the treacherous clay of the creek-bottom and Iyaksin fell. In the next instant the woman was mounting the bank with strong fleet steps, shouting to the camp her alarming cry.

All the night through Cree and Stony stretched a deadly girdle about the covert of the Blackfeet, who shouted defiance, sang their war song and hurled at their enemy in the darkness their vilest taunts and epithets. Iyaksin boasted in a loud voice that he might did he choose eat the bullets of the Saskatchewan dogs and pass through their lines unscathed.

"But," shouted the war chief in conclusion, "I am a warrior, and if we must die I will fall like a warrior with my men!"

The allies laughed at the Blackfoot's speech. They thought he boasted to bolster his courage.

"To-morrow," bragged The Horned Thunder, "I will prove myself the bravest among brave men. I will take the scalp of Iyaksin!"

Dawn found the allies moving to the attack. Flat on their bellies, taking advantage of every bit of cover, each tuft of grass, each tiny island of wolf-willow, they slipped forward, Blackfoot bullets singing about their ears, their answering shots throwing up spurts of dust as they buried themselves in the earth piled before the enemy pits lining the edge of the grove.

Koominakoos led. He heard the voice of the Blackfoot war chief haranguing his followers and bent his eyes on the spot as he slid towards it. Someone on his left spoke :

" Wherever you go, Koominakoos, I will lead you ! "

Koominakoos turned. The Horned Thunder was worming himself to the front.

Koominakoos lay quietly for a space ; then he slipped forward and passed the Stony.

" Wherever you go I shall be before you, Koominakoos ! "

Again the Stony wriggled to the front.

Once more, after an interval, Koominakoos slid along the grass and took the lead. And again his rival, reiterating his challange, passed him.

The Blackfoot fire was sweeping the plain. On his right Koominakoos saw a Stony suddenly clutch the grass with convulsive fingers, turn grimly over, shiver and lie still.

For the third time Koominakoos dug his toes into the sod behind him and sliding along the ground passed The Horned Thunder.

" Now," said the Cree to himself, " if he passes

me again no one shall know, for he will be killed. The honour will be all the honour of Koominakoos."

"Wherever you go, Koominakoos, I shall be before you—even to the edge of the Blackfoot pits!"

Again that mocking voice!

The Stony, now close beside the Cree, wormed ahead and once more took the lead. But ambition was the undoing of The Horned Thunder, as it has been of greater men before and since, for a bullet found its billet and left him very dead.

Koominakoos seized the limp log of flesh that had been his rival and drew it across the sod before him.

"Lead on, fool, who would outdo in bravery Koominakoos of the Crees!" he muttered. "You shall be first—even to the brink of the dog-soldiers' pits, as you said." And he rolled the body forward.

Hugging the earth like a snake, safe behind his gruesome breastwork, Koominakoos forged ahead. His followers were closing up in the rear, smothering the fire of the enemy with their own. At length he reached the very verge of the Blackfoot defences, his war cry cleft the din of battle, and springing over the body of The Horned Thunder he plunged into the pit before him. A shot rang in his ears and he sank senseless to the bottom.

It was fortunate for Koominakoos that his men were near. They stormed over the earthworks—knives flashed. The battle ended.

When Koominakoos came to he was very sore. He had lost an eye. Part of his scalp was missing.

But he turned up at Edmonton a few weeks later, his features lighted by the broad familiar grin and ready again at any time to take the warpath.

The boast of Iyaksin, that he might if he chose pass the allies' lines unharmed, was not so empty as they had believed. When they came to strip him they found on his body a webbed shirt of mail.

A shirt with a history, that. Lie back and dream. And presently, framed by the spent centuries upon the canvas before you, you may see a picture—a field red with the rain of slaughter and a Spanish soldier in deadly combat, his breast shielded by that iron garment from the shafts of the legions of Montezuma.

In the course of a life crammed with daring and adventure Koominakoos had not escaped its exactions. He had been twice tossed by buffalo bulls and badly injured, twice pitched headlong from his horse with results disastrous to his bones. Deep scars furrowed his side where Blackfoot bullets had plowed round his ribs. He was a famous conjuror and his own people believed he could not be killed, an illusion shared to some extent by his enemies. Before they ultimately took his own scalp it was the boast of Koominakoos that he had slain fourteen Blackfeet.

II

THE PLAINMAN HARKS BACK

Time, if he still lives, has dealt kindly with the Plainman, for already on the drab autumn afternoon that he told this tale in the house of Louis Marion, his farming instructor on One Arrow's reserve, the snows of many winters had powdered his head and he was bent and dim-eyed and walked with a stick.

That was at the close of the last century, when Briton and Boer fought each other across the veldt of far-away South Africa. It may have been echoes from that distant struggle, drifting to his ears through the lips of white men, that fanned the embers of his martial spirit and awoke in the slumbering brain vivid recollections of the warpath and of his own fighting days, so that he was moved to speak of them. Or perhaps it was the big plug of tobacco, received with manifestations of gratitude out of all proportion to the worth of the gift. Whatever the incitement, he began, and as he warmed to his subject his worn body stiffened, his arm swept the air in graphic gesture, snatches of war-song broke weirdly upon the ears of his listeners, and at a

high point in his narrative a whoop, vibrant and challenging, pierced the silent room. The old warrior was living again in those stirring scenes of the past and forgot for the moment that he was no longer young.

His story is given as he told it, as nearly as may be in his own words. The Plainman is speaking :

We were seven in the war party, my nephew, two Crees—my brother and myself—and five Stonies. We left the Moose Woods on the South Saskatchewan River in the heat of summer, and for thirty nights we travelled. Then we reached the land that lies between the Sweet Grass Hills and the Bear Paw Mountains. For seven of those thirty days we lived on roots ; we had no meat.

At daylight of the thirtieth day we saw buffalo. But almost immediately we saw also that they were being run by Blackfeet, and we hid ourselves.

That night we tried to find the Blackfoot camp. We did not succeed. You know, my nephew, that we always went to war on foot. War was not all in taking scalps, but in spoil of horses as well, and we expected to ride back to our own country.

Next day we tried to run buffalo, though it was a dangerous thing to do in the enemy's country. But we could kill none. However, we found a part of one, left by the Blackfeet, and this we took. It was a portion of the head of a bull. We cooked it by a fire of buffalo chips.

I do not know if I had taken two mouthfuls when we were startled by the Blackfoot war-whoop directly behind us. We faced about. A single

Blackfoot, mounted, sat staring down at us. He wheeled at once and dashed away at full speed. We knew he had gone to alarm his camp.

Most wished to run, but one among us objected; we all resolved, therefore, to stay, and got our guns ready for the battle we knew would soon be upon us.

Two Blackfeet appeared on a hill in the distance, then two more and yet again two more. In no time, my nephew, the hill two miles away was black with our enemies.

Said my brother: "If we go in that direction they will not find us." He pointed to the West, the Sweet Grass Hills. The Stonies refused to move. Then, when we saw that the enemy were so many, my brother urged that we dig holes with our knives to fight in. But again the Stonies said no; we had starved so much we were not strong enough to dig. They also said:

"As well stop where we are and fight. We shall all be killed, anyway."

The man who wished to fight [an Indian, speaking as was the Plainman, does not usually boast of the part he himself played; he leaves it to others to tell of that]—this man tossed a blanket in the air and fired his gun as a signal of defiance to the Blackfeet. They came forward with a rush, firing and singing their war-song. When they had approached within gunshot they divided and began circling us on their ponies.

A moment later my brother raised his gun and knocked a Blackfoot from his horse. It was the first

shot fired in the battle that then commenced in earnest.

Although we were seven, my nephew, only four in the party had guns, the others bows and arrows. Milk River ran not far away. Always we walked toward the river, the Blackfeet moving with us, keeping us in their circle. We separated a little, however, so that all should not be killed at once. To go the distance took us many smokes. We had held the enemy off with our fire, but now as we neared the river their heads appeared along the bank, their bodies being hidden below it. They were waiting for us to come close enough for their bullets to reach us.

We halted on a ridge, uncertain what next to do. Suddenly Wahnitch, a little Stony, began to sing his war-song. It was Wahnitch who had halted us.

"Why have you done this?" asked my brother. "We cannot stop; we shall all be killed."

This threw the Stony into a rage, for he took it as a reflection upon his bravery. He climbed the ridge, exposing himself to the Blackfoot bullets. They fired on him at once and we rushed up to his support. We drove the Blackfeet, who had left their shelter and pressed forward, back to the cover of the banks.

Then we advanced once more, Wahnitch and I leading. We reached a washout in a gully running down toward the Milk. Here we found fair protection.

My brother was farthest off. When the others came up they told me he had been killed. I left the

gully, exposing myself again, and saw my brother coming. I ran to meet him. He had been badly wounded. The artery of his thigh had been cut and blood gushed from the wound. I took his arm.

"*Ahkumayma*—courage, *neseem*!" I said. "Be like the wounded bull, thirsting for revenge!"

But my brother would come on no more war parties; he could walk no farther. Wahnitch ran to us on the ridge, and together we fought the Blackfeet and held them off.

My brother had grown weaker; he could not speak, and when at last his eyes closed I took his gun and arrows and left him. To one of the others who had none I gave my gun and kept my brother's weapons.

The Stonies who had stayed in the washout were speaking among themselves when I returned. I could not tell what they said, not knowing their tongue, but suddenly the four rushed and reached the broken valley of the Milk, leaving Wahnitch and I alone to the Blackfeet, who had not noticed them in time to head them off. The others, now under cover and able to defend themselves, were not followed; we two remained—that was sufficient for our enemies.

Wahnitch came back to the washout. My brother was dead. He was the friend of Wahnitch and my own brother; that is why we stayed with him to the end, instead of trying to save ourselves like the others.

Wahnitch grieved for my brother. "*Neseem! Neseem!*" he mourned. Then, with tears in his eyes, he turned to me and said:

"Let us now try to get away! Our brother is already in the Sand Hills."

I thought it would be madness and would not leave our shelter.

Wahnitch mounted the ridge once more, shouting the Stony war-cry, and fought the Blackfeet alone. After a time he came again to the washout.

"Let us try to escape, my brother—to reach the valley!" he urged. "We may succeed; if not, we will follow *n'chawamis* to the Sand Hills!"

"*Ah-huh!*" I answered him, then. Together we left the washout. We had run but a short way when Wahnitch fell, a Blackfoot bullet through his thigh. His leg was broken.

"*Tuppusee, neseem!* Fly, my brother!" he cried. "Do not stay. It is useless. You, at least, may save yourself. *Tuppusee!*"

I left him, then, with his broken thigh, fighting to the last on the open plain, and raced for the river. I saw the Blackfeet rush for the ridge where my dead brother lay and afterward to the little Stony.

Such is war, my nephew!

The Blackfeet's pursuit of me was delayed for a little while they dealt with the dead. Then a bullet in the ankle brought me down. My leg, I thought at first, was broken also, but I tried my foot and found that I could stand. And again I ran on. I passed over a ridge which hid me from Wahnitch and my enemies and down the other side.

Suddenly a hole opened before me. I leaped at it and plunged to the bottom.

The hole was deep and large enough only to admit

me. I am a tall man, but when I stood my head did not reach the top. Passages led away on either side. A clump of wolf willows hid the opening, and I wondered that I had seen it. But I ran directly upon it. (I think, my nephew, that it must have been one of the holes of the big snake that feeds the Thunder Bird.)

I did not explore the passages, but turned and placing the muzzle of my gun in the hole, waited for the Blackfeet. I heard them ride over my head after they had scalped my brother and Wahnitch and stripped them of their feathered war-bonnets and handsome dresses.

After a time all was quiet, darkness came, and piling earth beneath my feet until I could reach out I placed the barrel of my gun across the hole and pulled myself up.

Long I lay listening to make sure the Blackfeet had not discovered my hiding-place and were not watching for me. Then I stole away.

It was a hard, long trip, my nephew, back to my own country and the camp of my people at the Moose Woods, and my ankle troubled me much, but in twenty nights I reached it. I was not hungry, for I still had sixty balls and killed buffalo on the way.

The Stonies who escaped had returned and reported all their companions killed, so my people were greatly astonished to see me. My ankle was long in healing.

Now, my nephew, here is the oath I take as to this story you have heard :

" Kind God, witness that this that I have spoken is the truth ; also our mother, the Earth ! "

And you, who write these things on paper, may take the same oath and swear to their truth, as I do, before Kisse Manito and the Earth.

In after years the Blackfeet told how, when they once chased a Cree warrior on the banks of the Milk River, he had turned into stone. There was a rock near the hole which had lost me to my enemies. The Blackfeet could think of no way in which I might have escaped, and that, my nephew, is why they believed I had never left their country.

The Plainman's tale was ended, but he smiled grimly as he picked up his tobacco and reached into his firebag for his knife and pipe.

III

THE WAR PARTY THAT TURNED

MENTION of Wandering Spirit, Cree war chief hanged at Battleford in the fall of '85 for the murder of Indian Agent T. T. Quinn, first victim of the Frog Lake Massacre, lends particular interest to this story of the narrator, Gray Eyes, son of the Salteaux, Ayandawais :

The war party, numbering about thirty, had made its way down into the Blackfoot country. Apistatim, leader and conjuror, from time to time set up his medicine tent and spoke with the spirits to learn whether or not we should be successful. At length, following one of these communions, he gave us this message :

" We shall soon see the enemy, but we are not to regard him or discover ourselves. That way our medicine will be powerful and good luck will attend us. But if we engage him, if we are seen by him, we may as well turn. Our party will not be favoured."

We were afoot, according to our custom, with two scouts always in advance, on the lookout for the enemy and to guard against surprise.

One day, after travelling for some time, we saw our scouts on the slope of a hill ahead signalling that the enemy was in sight. We stripped and made ready for battle ; then proceeded.

When we came up we were told by the scouts that a single Blackfoot was stalking buffalo in a wide meadow beyond the hill. Extending, we crawled to the peak and looked over.

The Blackfoot, on his belly perhaps a quarter of a mile off, was making his way through the tall grass toward a herd of buffalo feeding quietly some distance ahead.

Suddenly he arose. We saw the smoke from his gun and presently the sound of the explosion reached us. The herd were off like the wind, but we saw, also, that one had been wounded, for he staggered and soon tumbled to the earth. The Blackfoot ran toward him and a moment later we watched him busily skinning and cutting up the animal.

While this was happening the war party disputed as to what should be done. Here was a Blackfoot, our inveterate enemy. Should we allow him to escape ? The thought was hateful to us. Some urged that we rush upon and kill him, others that we avoid him and continue ; otherwise, as our leader had conjured, we should have no luck.

At length the Blackfoot, having disposed of his kill, spread a part of the robe on the grass, and cutting the rest into strips, piled the choice pieces of the meat on the robe, bound it with the green rawhide lines into a neat pack, raised the pack and settled it upon his shoulders. Then he moved off.

Meanwhile none of us had stirred, but now the enemy was leaving us. We forgot the prophecy of bad luck, the warning of the conjuror—the conjuror himself forgot it. The temptation was too great. As one man we rose and swooped over the hill.

Something—the jingle of metal; our guns, knives or belts—must have reached the Blackfoot, for we had run but a short way when he stopped suddenly and looked round. The pack fell from his shoulders, and bending over he set out at a mad pace for some woods bordering a creek a mile or so distant. We drew in our belts and sped after him.

Wandering Spirit, a member of the party, soon took the lead. It amazed us to see how quickly he outstripped us and drew up on the enemy. But as he came near I thought his pace slackened a little. Then he swerved to the right and began to circle round the foe. He did not care to approach too near him, it seemed to us. Soon the two were running abreast.

Wandering Spirit—Kahpaypamachakwayo—they tell you was a brave man; but look how he conducted himself that day! Why did he not close with the Blackfoot, kill him and take his scalp, as he might have done? I think, *n'chawamis*, he must have been afraid. He kept off, and presently, long before the Blackfoot, though he too was very fast, could reach the woods, other swift runners of our party overtook him. Then one of our shots took effect and he was stopped. In a moment he was surrounded. We fired on until he fell and lay still. Then, shouting our war-cry, we rushed

upon him, our knives in our hands, and soon his head was stripped of every hair and he was hacked to pieces.

We remembered, then, too late, what Apistatim had conjured—that we must avoid discovering ourselves to the first enemy we encountered or we should have no luck. It was, therefore, useless for us to continue and we turned.

Our war party was a failure, for among the thirty of us we had taken just a single scalp.

IV

THE BATTLEGROUND OF OLD FORT PITT

Although at Edmonton clashes between Crees and Blackfeet were of frequent occurrence, it is a question whether they were not even more common round Fort Pitt and along the Battle River south of that point. Of late years maps of the country appear to have been swept almost bare of the significant and picturesque names for many of its physical features they once bore—names given to these features by the Indians, suggested by a striking outline or aspect, or bestowed in commemoration of an unusual happening in the locality.

Thus, the Five Blackfoot Hills, south of Pitt and near the present town of Maidstone, took their name from a fight at the feet of these lofty eminences in which five warriors of that puissant tribe were slain by the Crees. Could anyone imagine a more fitting or enduring memorial of an historic event? But the Blackfoot Hills no longer appear on the maps. Cut Knife Hill, south of the Battle River, recalls the Sarcee chief who fought and lost his last battle upon its wooded slopes and forfeited his scalp to the Crees.

The Nose, a prominent landmark, the Eye Hill,

Manito Lake, the Hand Hills, The Knee, Grizzly Bear Coulee—where could one find names more graphic, more intriguing? The location of these outstanding geographical points was no mystery to the early resident of the territories, but how many have even heard of them to-day? It is a pity that they are vanishing from the maps, for they breathe the very atmosphere of daring and romance and are likely with the passing of the years to become less than a memory.

The fact that it was the smaller establishment and nearer to the open plains than Edmonton makes it probable that Fort Pitt and its environment were the more active field of conflict between the warring tribes. Henry Blanc, a halfbreed former employee of the Hudson's Bay Company at Pitt, who died recently, was a mine of reminiscence of the early days about the old fort. Among other things, the aged native related the following:

"The old people all know how many were the buffalo sixty years ago. I can remember to have seen them grazing in hundreds round Fort Pitt with the Company's cattle.

"It would be about the year 1862 that another halfbreed and myself, with eight or ten Plains Crees, were sent by the master at the fort with carts to the plains for fresh buffalo-meat. The regular Hudson's Bay Company servants started from the Saskatchewan forts each June in York boats for Norway House and York Factory, to bring in the next year's outfits, and did not return until fall. This left the forts short-handed, and it was the custom of the masters

to engage Indians to accompany the half-breed hunters when they went to the plains for meat.

"We had had a successful hunt and loaded all our carts. We would start next day on our return to Fort Pitt, and in camp that night were enjoying a whole side of buffalo meat roasted on a pole before a big fire, when our horses, placed for security inside the circle formed by the carts, raised their heads and snorted loudly. Seizing our guns, we jumped to our feet, exclaiming, all together, '*Blackfeet!*' although we could see nothing.

"We slept little, but lay, our hands on our guns, through the night, watching the horses. With the first flush of dawn we ate breakfast, and by the time the sun appeared above the prairie our ponies were in the carts and we were on our way back to the Saskatchewan.

"We had gone only a short distance when we heard the clatter of hoofs, and looking round saw ten Blackfeet following furiously upon our trail. The country was rolling and partly wooded, and the Crees, who were mounted, disappeared as if by magic among the hills and bluffs to the north. The Blackfeet charged up, threw themselves off their horses, snatched away our blankets and guns, smashed our carts, and leaving just a single horse and no saddle or blanket to the two of us, mounted and hurried after the Crees. They did not catch them, and our Indians got safely into Fort Pitt. We arrived next day.

"The Blackfeet followed their enemies to the Saskatchewan and hid on the south side opposite the fort to watch for other parties of their foes, who

usually came into Pitt from the south to trade. A day or two later a small party of Crees, somehow avoiding the ambush, arrived from the plains to secure tobacco and ammunition, intending to return immediately. Louis Chastellain, the clerk in charge, advised them to delay leaving until nightfall. He had noticed that day across the river a number of mirror-flashes and guessed them to be signals made by Blackfeet lurking in the woods.

"The three Crees in the party crossed late in the evening, but had been gone only a short while when we heard heavy firing in the distance which lasted for some time. An old Cree woman in the fort hoisted a buffalo robe on a pole and prayed for the safety of the three men of her people.

"At daylight next morning one of our men, rising early and looking across the Saskatchewan, saw two Crees sitting on the shore—Little Pine, who afterward became a chief with a reserve south of the Battle River, and Papakeyness, or The Grasshopper. Seeing no stir about the fort they swam the river with their horses, came up the bank, and knocking at the gate were admitted.

"They told us that soon after leaving the night before they were attacked by seven Blackfeet. After a hot battle two of the enemy were killed and another wounded. The Crees had then fallen back to the river. They had left their companion, who had also received a wound in the arm, on the other side. His friends at once crossed over for him.

"Later in the day Little Pine and Papakeyness returned to the scene of the fight, and after scalping

their dead foes cut them all in pieces. The wounded Blackfoot they found propped against a tree. They finished him, and after cutting off his arms and legs returned to the fort and left again the same night for their own camp in the south.

"Less than a week passed when a large party of Blackfeet appeared on the south bank of the river, and calling over demanded to be crossed. Two old men and a number of frightened women were all who happened at the time to be in the fort and no one would go for the Blackfeet; whereupon they crossed with their ponies three miles above the fort, and riding down, went through every house, taking from the women, who were too scared to offer any resistance, blankets, shawls, gowns and all their finery.

"In one of the houses a woman lay sick in bed. They tried to pull the blanket from under her, but she fought them off. A big warrior then, with a knife in his hand, raised his arm as if to stab her. The woman bared her breast.

"'If you are man enough to kill a woman, strike!' she taunted him.

"The Blackfoot's arm dropped.

"'No,' he said, 'you are too brave. Go on—live.'

"However, he snatched the feather bed from beneath her, ripped it open and scattered the feathers all over the house.

"They next went to the store, smashed the door in, and after helping themselves to anything they fancied and could carry off, laughing and singing they re-crossed the Saskatchewan.

"That was the last seen of the Blackfeet."

V

THE MILITANT SPOON

While, as has been said, instances were not unknown among the redmen where admiration for a brave foe led his captors to spare his life, Ameequan apparently was moved by other considerations and not this element in adopting the course he did. No doubt he reasoned sagely that greater honour would accrue to him should he succeed in bringing his enemy single-handed into camp than if he took his scalp. Whatever the inciting motive, the story is interesting as evidence that the Indian was capable on occasion of displaying magnanimity toward his foes, and also as illustrating a somewhat unusual and pleasing phase of Indian character. The story runs :

It was in the fall that Kahmeeschetookehewup—Many Brave Feathers—the great warrior chief of the lower Plains Crees, left the centre of his domain near Fort Ellice at the head of a war party on this raid into the Blackfoot country. The Crees were short of horses. The Blackfeet, when they were short of horses, crossed the Rockies and stole from the Nez Perces and the Kootenais ; then the Crees, in turn, stole from them. Many Brave Feathers and

his men had brought plenty of lines, for they would secure many ponies, they thought. They travelled for ten sleeps; then they reached Blackfoot territory.

The conjuror set up his lodge and divined that the enemy were close and that the war party must send out three spies. At the council that night they were selected. One was Ameequan, The Spoon; among the followers of Many Brave Feathers none was more brave than he.

The scouts went on for two sleeps; then in the grass and beside the small lakes they saw the Blackfoot signs. Immediately, alarm seized the companions of Ameequan. They were exhausted, they pleaded —could go no farther.

"Wait for me here, then," said Ameequan. "I will go on alone and find the camp of the Blackfeet."

After Ameequan had left them his timid companions grew more and more fearful. That night they deserted and ran back to the war party. They told a long story of attack and said that Ameequan had surely been killed.

For six days Many Brave Feathers waited, hoping that the dismal conjecture of the scouts would prove baseless and that Ameequan would make his way back. The conjuror again set up his parchment tent, which looked like a tree-box and shook and rustled as do the dry leaves on the poplars in autumn. And this presently was the message that came to the waiting warriors:

"The signs are bad. Ameequan has met the enemy, who are many, and fights desperately. The end I cannot see, but I fear for Ameequan."

"Let us go back," said Many Brave Feathers. "Let us return to the place at the Elbow of the South Saskatchewan where it was appointed that we meet our people. There we will make up a bigger and stronger war party and, starting afresh, avenge the death of Ameequan!"

When Ameequan parted from his companions he went on for two sleeps. At dawn of the third day, through the fog that lay thick on the brown withered grass of the plains, the melancholy howl of a wolf floated to his ears. Ameequan, however, was a thorough plainsman.

"I think," he deliberated, "that this wolf has lost his tail. Also that, in the fog, he has lost the pack to which he belongs and hopes by his music to bring an answer that will lead him to it. I shall see."

Guided by the long-drawn dismal wails Ameequan moved warily in the direction of their source. The fog shut out all a short space away, but gradually he drew nearer and at length, seated on a hill before him, made out the form of a man. Dropping his gun Ameequan loosened the knife in his belt and prepared to creep upon him.

The unsuspecting foe howled again, and taking advantage of the protection afforded by the sound Ameequan rushed toward him. As the cry ceased the stalker flung himself flat in the grass and lay motionless. When it began again he was up instantly and made another rush. The fog had become less dense, making his approach more difficult. At length only a few paces separated them.

Once more the Blackfoot howled, and with a final rush Ameequan leaped on the foe, clamped his arms about him and bore him to the earth.

Over and over they rolled, first one, then the other uppermost. But in the end Ameequan proved the stronger and the struggle ceased with the Cree triumphant.

The Blackfoot's belt, he saw, held a knife. He snatched and tossed it away on the prairie; then drew his own knife and holding the point against his enemy's throat threatened him fiercely with death. Quickly the Blackfoot made the sign of submission and Ameequan bade him rise. He walked him to the place where he had dropped his gun and the lines he had brought for stealing horses. Here he bound his captive's hands behind him, and warning him to make no sound but march ahead, immediately started on his return to the homeland of his people. For two days they journeyed, and in all that time had nothing to eat.

At noon next day the Blackfoot turned suddenly, and crooking a forefinger on either side of his head above the ears to designate horns, made the buffalo sign. Ameequan bound his captive hand and foot and left him lying on the prairie while he went toward the herd he had not sooner noticed, and after a cautious approach fired and brought down a fat cow. He marched the Blackfoot to the dead animal, and roasting the choicest portions of the meat before a fire of buffalo chips they ate until they had satisfied their hunger. The meal finished, Ameequan loaded

sufficient from the carcase for their further needs on the Blackfoot's shoulders and they went on again, the Cree endeavouring to make his prisoner understand that, so long as he forebore to attempt escape or to take him at a disadvantage, he had nothing to fear. That he regarded the future with gloomy misgiving the depression on the features of the Blackfoot plainly showed, but he obeyed resignedly all his captor's commands. That way it seemed, for the time being at least, lay safety, and while there was life there was hope. On the contrary, to adopt any other course, he knew, was to invite immediate death.

After three days' more of hard marching they at length neared the appointed rendezvous of the Crees on the South Saskatchewan.

It was night. Darkness lay like a pall on the high ragged hills overlooking the broad valley of the river in which was pitched the great Cree camp. The measured beat of the drum and the weird minor chant of the war-song echoed far up and down the deep gash of the South Saskatchewan, signifying that a big war dance heralded the return of the war party. True, it had in no way distinguished itself, yet the warriors could at least laud and lament the brave Ameequan, boast of past victories and forecast the rich harvest of revenge to be reaped after awhile.

There was a lull in the dancing and the boom of the drum : Many Brave Feathers had arisen to speak.

Black and yellow paint masked the features of the

great chief. On the soft-tanned buffalo-skin thrown across his shoulder were crimson spots, token of wounds received in many a fierce encounter. Other symbols, too, it bore—figures shaped like hurdles for the war parties he had led; still other figures in the form of an X surmounted by a small nought representing the head—the Indian drawing for a man—and designating the enemies whose scalps hung from his medicine pole. His broad chest and right arm were bare. The many plumes fixed in his war plait tossed and glistened with each movement of his limbs and body. In his right hand he held as a fan the glossy wing of an eagle; in the crook of his left elbow, a bundle of dry sticks.

As each *coup* was told off, taking a stick from his arm and advancing to the fire in the centre of the dancing lodge, he placed it upon the blazing pile; the adulatory "*How! How!*" burst from the throats of his seated followers, the big drum boomed and the flames leaped higher, fiercer, as though rejoicing with them in his triumphs.

He had told an adventure for every stick but the last. The fan he had transferred to his left hand and he was indicating with the remaining stick in the right the position of the Medicine Hat and recounting his most famous deed of daring.

It was a tale of his younger days. Cree and Blackfoot opposed each other in savage battle. A young Blackfoot, ambitious to show himself braver than his fellows, rode like a whirlwind down the Cree front, discharging his arrows among them as he passed. Many Brave Feathers sprang from the

pit where he lay to the back of his pony and dashed after him. The Blackfoot turned and raced for his own side. Many Brave Feathers pressed on; he was overhauling him. . . . The faces of his enemies were in a row before him, their arrows whistled all about him as he came abreast of the foe. He leaned over and with the knife in his grip struck the Blackfoot, just once, a backhand blow, across the middle. The young brave fell, his body almost severed. Then Many Brave Feathers galloped back.

He had finished the recital—was speaking the last sentence. Every neck craned forward, every eye fixed him, every ear was strained to catch his every word. It was the pregnant hush before the thunder of applause. As he stepped nearer the fire with the last stick he heard his name called aloud outside the dancing lodge, and pausing he recognized Ameequan's voice.

"Kahmeeschetookehewup," The Spoon was saying, "I have brought the man you all ran away from! I wish to bring him into the Soldiers' Lodge!"

For a moment a tense stillness held the dancing lodge. The warriors sat dumbly waiting, each dreading to be first to move or speak. Ameequan, they knew, was dead. Then a fearful murmur ran round their ranks.

"Peace!" Many Brave Feathers had regained his composure. He raised his voice. "Glad indeed is Kahmeeschetookehewup that you still live and have come back to us. Enter, Ameequan!"

And preceded by his captive, still with his burden of meat upon his shoulders, The Spoon marched into

the glow of the leaping fire in the dancing lodge and stopped before the gaze of his astonished fellow-tribesmen.

A roar arose from the throats of the assembled warriors. They crowded round him, eager to press his hand, to hear his tale. Many Brave Feathers motioned again for silence.

"Speak, Ameequan. You only are a warrior among us. You only have the right. We listen."

Then Ameequan told his story, modestly, without vaunt or show of pride. The whole camp had gathered before the dancing lodge to hear it. When he had finished they would have shouted again, but once more Many Brave Feathers raised a hand.

"My people," he said, "our brother Ameequan has shamed me, shamed us all. Frightened by shadows we ran away and left him to the enemy. And while we fill the night with vain boasting he returns and humbles us with his tale of quiet daring. Ameequan has shown himself more bold than Many Brave Feathers. Hereafter his place in council is next to me and I adopt the Blackfoot as my son. Let no harm come to him."

And with one voice the people shouted until the night and the hills rang and rang again:

"*Ameequan! Brave Ameequan! Excepting only Many Brave Feathers there is none so fearless among the Crees!*"

APPENDIX

I

THE OLDEST CHARTERED COMPANY IN THE WORLD

A BRIEF review of the Hudson's Bay Company's claims to the vast territory of the Canadian Northwest and their method of conducting trade over this enormous region will be of interest.

In the year 1670 Charles II. established a corporation consisting of his cousin and certain specified associates. This corporation was invested with absolute proprietorship, subordinate sovereignty and exclusive traffic over an unknown territory under the general designation of Prince Rupert's Land, which comprised all lands known or to be discovered within the entrance of Davis Strait, being held to include all lands that shed their waters into Hudson Strait. For more than a hundred years the Company confined its operations almost entirely to the coast, and it was not until approximately the time the American Republic was proclaimed that any real effort was made to establish itself inland.

New France had not only claimed sovereignty up to the Arctic Circle but had actually advanced as far as the shores of Hudson Bay, and this position was recognized by the letters patent granted to

Prince Rupert, which expressely exempted from their scope any actual possession of any Christian prince or state. The claims of France were confirmed in 1697 by the Treaty of Ryswick, but were abandoned in 1713 by the Treaty of Utrecht.

While Canada was still French, traders from the great lakes and Montreal had established themselves in the Saskatchewan country as far as the Rockies. These trading operations were interrupted for a few years between 1759 and 1763 by conquests and cessions of territory, but from the latter year a more systematic trade was carried on under English auspices until the year 1783, when the Northwest Company was formed in Montreal.

Then began a real war between the rival companies. They pillaged one another's brigades and posts and made prisoners of each other's followers, many of whom were killed in the frequent clashes—a condition which ended only with the amalgamation in 1821 of the two companies. They had both by this time extended their operations far beyond the original limits. In 1772 the older company had traversed the basin of the Coppermine River, while the younger in 1789 and 1793 had progressed down the Mackenzie River to the Arctic Sea and across the Rockies to the Pacific Coast.

A body whose legal claim included all possible discoveries had a general equity in the actual discoveries themselves, but beyond this another provision in the charter granted by Charles II. regarded such discoveries, for the purposes of trade, as natural accretions to the original grant.

In 1821 Parliament, to put a stop to the evils arising out of this bitter opposition, empowered the Crown to issue licenses for the Indian territories, which expressly defined those territories to be all the wildernesses in British North America to the west of Rupert's Land. The Government exercised this authority in favour of the Hudson's Bay Company, as remodelled by the coalition. So far as trade was concerned there was now to be no difference between the Indian territories and Rupert's Land, except that the charter for Rupert's Land was to be perpetual, that for the Indian territories for successive periods of twenty-one years each.

The new association virtually ruled the western land through 75 degrees of longitude, extending from Davis Strait to Mount St. Elias, and through 78 degrees of latitude, from the mouth of the Mackenzie to the border of California. Some twenty-five years later this territory was reduced and the boundary shifted to the 49th parallel by that treaty which lost us part of Western Canada. In 1859 the remainder of the transmontane tract was included by the instituting of the national colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia, and when in a year or two the second term of the license terminated it was allowed to expire without renewal. The rest of the Indian territories had been relinquished to the United States before 1821, with the exception of Oregon, but the loss to the Hudson's Bay Company was more formal than actual. It now exercised a supremacy on a wider basis than under the legal monopoly of old.

The withdrawal of the license did not at first, except nominally, affect Rupert's Land or the rest of the Indian territory, but the result may be regarded as the natural fruit of human progress and the adoption of free trade and colonization as part and parcel of the nation's policy.

The effect of this change upon the aboriginal population, however, was unquestionable. Under the former system natives of the country were neither extirpated nor expatriated. Most of the Indians were reliable, and as a rule a fine healthy race. To-day, while not perhaps decreasing, they seem in many localities to have acquired most of the vices and diseases of the whites, with few of their redeeming virtues.

With regard to the descendants of mixed white and Indian blood, that has been achieved which has never anywhere else been successfully attempted—the elevation of the halfbreed in many cases to an equal degree of civilization with his pure-white brethren.

Under the original deed granted by Charles II. the Hudson's Bay Company acquired certain powers beyond the limits of Rupert's Land, being invested with jurisdiction over their own servants whether in the wilderness or on the high seas, and entitled to make war on any non-Christian peoples or princes. Their internal constitution as regulated by letters patent was peculiar in this respect, that without any restrictions such as generally limit similar associations the influence of a proprietor was determined by the number of shares he held, one vote being attached

to every hundred pounds' worth of stock. Further, the Company at large was required to act, at home through a Governor and Committee and abroad through a Council. The commissioned officers in the country were called "wintering partners," and received among them two-fifths of the net profits of the concern. At this time and for a number of years afterward there were two grades of officers, chief factors and chief traders. The two-fifths allotted to the wintering partners was divided into eighty-five shares, and it was intended that there should be a sufficient number of commissioned officers appointed to absorb the whole of these shares, but at times the list remained unfilled, with the result that the shareholders got more than their due. For a number of years the net profits varied from round 64,000 to 106,000 pounds sterling per year, averaging about 80,000 pounds sterling. Almost every dollar of this money came from the trade in furs.

The furs were usually shipped annually from two posts, Moose Factory on James Bay and York Factory on the west coast of Hudson Bay.

In the year 1870 the Hudson's Bay Company surrendered certain of its rights to the Canadian Government in consideration of the payment of the sum of 300,000 pounds sterling, an allotment of land at each trading post north of the area called the Fertile Belt (which was described as extending south of the north branch of the Saskatchewan River to the American boundary), and seven million acres within that Belt. As each township was surveyed the Company secured in it one and three-quarter

sections until the total acreage had been allotted, their sections being numbers 8 and three-fourths of 26 out of the thirty-six sections into which each township was divided.

Thus the Hudson's Bay Company, the last of the great trading associations which have figured so largely and in the main so creditably in the commercial and colonial annals of England, parted with its sovereign powers in Canada. But the old organization, despite competition, is doing a greater business than ever before, in magnificent modern departmental stores established in the cities and towns springing up throughout Western Canada, and holding the bulk of the Indian trade in the vast wilderness of the still-unpeopled North by virtue of the prestige of two and a half centuries of honourable dealing.

II

THE SILENT LAND

At the most southerly point at which Arctic waters indent the northern coasts of the Dominion, that invisible line of demarcation known as the Arctic Circle crosses North America. This is at the tip of Bathurst Inlet, in latitude 66 degrees 33 minutes north, and therefore, at that, not a great way south. The Circle divides the north temperate from the north frigid zone, though it is improbable that if one stepped, either way, from one zone to the other across it, he would notice any marked change in temperature.

From the Churchill River, south of latitude 56, to Bathurst Inlet is, in a direct line, approximately 750 miles. From Fort Churchill, on Hudson Bay, to the east end of Lake Athabasca, and from Chesterfield Inlet on the Bay to the east end of Great Slave Lake, the distance, also in a direct line, is approximately the same—between 400 and 500 miles. From Chesterfield to Fort Simpson on the Mackenzie River, however, it is nearer 900 miles. The vast terrain embraced within these boundaries is the only remaining considerable expanse of unexplored territory

on the North American continent. It may truly be called The Silent Land.

It has, of course, been traversed. More than a century and a half ago Samuel Hearne, an officer of the Hudson's Bay Company, left Fort Prince of Wales at the mouth of the Churchill River with a small party of Indians, and returned at the end of two years after having reached Coronation Gulf, an arm of the Arctic Sea, at the mouth of the Coppermine River. The distance between these points—always by the map—would be 700 miles, though by the rambling route followed by Hearne it could not have been less than a thousand. Back, in whose honour a great river of the North has been named, Franklin, Richardson, Rae, MacFarlane, Pike, Seton, Whitney and a few others, have gone some distance into the "Barren Ground" north and east of the Great Slave Lake. The Tyrrells (J. B. and J. W.) traversed the whole stretch between Great Slave Lake and Chesterfield Inlet twenty or thirty years ago and wrote an engrossing narrative of the trip. Inspector F. H. French, of the North-West Mounted Police, in 1917-8, made a memorable journey, with Chesterfield Inlet as a starting point, to Coronation Gulf, in search of the Eskimo murderers of Radford and Street, adventurers who quarrelled with their native guides after having made their way across these great empty spaces to the shores of the Arctic and did not live to reach their objective, Herschel Island. A geological survey party has spent several summers exploring in the southern part of the region, Burwash has covered

most of it, and only recently Knud Rassmussen, the Danish explorer, traversed the whole territory from the Arctic to civilization in the south. But in the main this vast sub-Arctic land lies as it has lain from the beginning. With the exception of a few families of nomadic Eskimos no human beings inhabit the silent land. Only occasionally do bands of Indians, from their home territory about Great Slave and Great Bear Lakes, venture upon its rolling plateaus to hunt the caribou and musk ox which are its chief edible fauna.

What is the character of this mighty sweep of treeless hill and plain? Naturally, the answer must be vague, but this much we know: It has many broad lakes and streams, teeming with fish; Arctic foxes, wolves, wolverines and other fur-bearers abound; succulent lichens clothe its hills, and nourishing grasses, sedges and mosses its tundra—rich fodder for the droves of herbivorous animals that roam its illimitable reaches. And in summer, as Seton tells us in his *The Arctic Prairies*, it blossoms like the rose, a veritable riot of bloom.

A missionary priest, picturing to a Yellow Knife Indian the loveliness of the celestial region, waited for his comment. Said the native:

"Is it more beautiful than the country of the musk ox in summer, when the mist blows over the lakes, the hills are green and flame with flowers, the waters blue, and the solitude is broken by the cry of the loon? That is beautiful, and if heaven is more so my heart will be glad and I shall be happy to rest there until I am very, very old."

Hearne, as has been said, reached the Arctic on Coronation Gulf at the mouth of the Coppermine River, which he found swarming with salmon on their way up from the sea to spawn. At a point a few miles above the gulf the maps show a bend in the stream marked "Bloody Fall," which recalls an incident related in detail by the explorer in his journal, as follows:

It would appear that, before the coming of the law to the North, various Indian tribes of the great parent Athabascan stock—Yellow Knives, Dog Ribs, Beavers, Loucheux and Chippewyans—harboured a fierce enmity for the Eskimos. This is easily accounted for. The Eskimos, while they lived on the coast, frequently penetrated the hinterland to hunt caribou and musk ox. The Indians regarded the interior as their own special game preserve, and these incursions as encroachments upon their territory and their authors as thieves, to be dealt with accordingly.

The Yellow Knives with whom the explorer travelled, as they went down the Coppermine, kept a sharp lookout for Eskimos. One day some hunters of the band came into camp with the intelligence that a few miles below and on the opposite side of the river were five strange lodges. The Indians at once prepared to attack that night when the unsuspecting Eskimos slept. Hearne was powerless to interfere, and this they did.

A frightful massacre ensued, the Eskimos, twenty in all, taken entirely unaware, being butchered in cold blood.

A young girl, wounded from a spearthrust in the side, ran to Hearne, threw herself at his feet, and clinging to his knees implored him to save her. He attempted to intercede, when the two Indians who had followed her turned menacingly on the explorer and asked whether he desired an Eskimo for a wife? Without waiting for a reply they transfixed her with their spears. As the wretched girl still lived Hearne begged them to put an end to her sufferings, a request to which they gave a grudging compliance.

A little later his party came upon an old woman spearing fish some distance below the scene of the tragedy. Having been absent from the camp overnight she was ignorant of what had happened, and being almost blind did not recognize the new arrivals as strangers and enemies until they attacked and killed her. Hearne mentions that notwithstanding her poor sight the ground about her was strewn with fish, and that she had only to thrust in her spear to bring one and often two to the surface.

That the silent land contains minerals is also known. The Coppermine itself takes its name from the quantities of this metal that the natives, both Indian and Eskimo, dug from its banks, to fashion into weapons, tools and utensils for domestic use. The Yellow Knives, the tribe with which Hearne was associated, derived their title from the same circumstance. What other minerals the region may in the future yield can only be conjectured, but it is unlikely that so wide a territory lacks important resources of this character.

Northern Ontario and Quebec are producing

annually millions in gold, copper, silver, iron and nickel. The territory immediately north of The Pas is a vast reservoir of mineral wealth, awaiting only the magic touch of capital for its development, and this capital is now in process of being supplied. The known deposits of ore in that region, chiefly gold and copper, aggregate in value approximately half a billion dollars. Immediately north of this great mineralized area again lies the Barren Ground with its worth in precious metals yet to be revealed. Hudson Bay itself contains whole islands of solid iron ore.

Most persons have doubtless read and seen photographs of the enormous herds of caribou that range the Barren Ground between the Churchill River and the Arctic Ocean. These herds have for ages constituted the chief food supply of many of the northern Indians—one tribe of which is, in fact, known as the Caribou Eaters—and to a more limited extent of the Eskimos.

The Barren Ground caribou is a distinct variety of that species, considerably smaller and lighter in colour than its kindred of the wooded regions to the south and west. The caribou is migratory by nature, travelling in these great droves in summer from the vicinity of York Factory to the shores of the Arctic, where its young is born. So tame are they that Pike tells of standing, rifle in hand, while a herd streamed past on either side so close that he had no difficulty in picking out those in best condition to be killed for food. This herd, he mentions, was six days in passing his camp, adding that he cannot

believe the buffalo on the plains could ever have been more numerous. Tyrrell describes a similar phenomenon, and took photographs of an immense herd, the animals composing which were so innocent of man as a creature to be feared that many approached to smell the camera. Although great numbers are slaughtered annually to be cured and stored by the Indians in the form of pemmican and dried meat for winter use, there has been no perceptible diminution in the herds. The musk ox is not nearly so numerous. However, it is the grasses, mosses and lichens of the Barren Ground that support this teeming mass of herbivorous life.

A Vancouver newspaper not long ago carried a story dealing with a project fraught with greater interest to the people of the Dominion than two-thirds of those who read it probably realized. It concerned the transfer of 5,000 reindeer, owned by a Canadian company, from Alaska, where the herd is at present domiciled, to the basin of the Mackenzie River below Great Slave Lake.

Thirty years ago the United States Government, casting about for means of adding to the food resources of its Eskimo wards, imported from Lapland 1,200 reindeer, an animal that, in both meat and milk, for further back than history runs, has been the mainstay of northern Europe and Asia. They were turned loose on the Alaska tundra. Lapp herdsmen were brought over to look after the animals during the period of their acclimatization and to instruct the Eskimos in their care. To-day the reindeer herds in Alaska aggregate 600,000 head, although

150,000 have been killed for food. The territory and the pasturage covering it have proved superlatively adapted to the nature of its four-footed immigrants, and they have thriven mightily. Given suitable environment the reindeer is prolific, doubling in numbers every three years, and the experiment has turned out a highly profitable one for the United States Government, enabling it largely to dispense with the necessity of providing for its Eskimo population, individual natives now owning as many as 2,500 head, or twice the total of the original importation. Besides being valuable as food the reindeer is trained to haul, drive or ride.

Since its success has been so eloquently demonstrated several American companies have gone into the business of breeding reindeer for market, and to-day in season reindeer meat is a staple article of diet in Seattle, Portland, San Francisco and doubtless other American cities. The meat is said to be as appetizing as beef, with the tenderness and flavour of venison.

It would be impracticable to make a commercial project of putting caribou meat on the market, because the caribou, being migratory, is here to-day and gone to-morrow. Moreover, the caribou is game, and as such not available for sale or purchase as food. But the reindeer, while of the caribou family, is a domestic animal. He is herded and can be located when wanted, slaughtered and the meat sold and consumed without violation of the law. The snowfall on the northern prairies of the Barren Ground is light, and the lichens, rather than being

injured, are said to be improved as pasturage by frost, and they may easily be reached by pawing. Cold holds no terror for the reindeer; its young is born in the snow. The cost of rearing is insignificant; three or four men with dogs will look after 4,000 or 5,000 at an outlay of less than a dollar a head per annum.

Alaska alone has room and sustenance for four million reindeer, and the Barren Ground of Canada for at least three times as many, or twelve million animals. As has been said, they double in number by natural increase every three years. So that if this experiment of transferring 5,000 animals to the Barren Ground proves as successful as its promoters are confident it will be, in a few years reindeer steaks may be as common on Canadian dinner tables as they now are on those of our neighbours across the boundary on the Pacific slope.

However, this experiment with reindeer, while interesting enough in itself, possesses a far greater significance for the Dominion for another and an entirely different reason, this reason being that it marks the first step in opening to commerce that vast vacant territory of her Barren Ground, the Arctic prairies of Seton, and in making possible the exploiting of the wealth that may be found there.

The frontier of Canada has gradually been pushed west and north. First came the fur-trader, then settlement and grain-growing, commencing in Manitoba and extending into what are to-day the provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta; next Peace River—though as early as the '60's miners were

washing thirty dollars a day in gold from the sandbars of that majestic stream. Now we have the Hudson Bay Railway, starting at The Pas and nearing completion on the shores of that great inland sea. Is it too wild a stretch of the imagination to envision a time in the not-distant future when a second Hudson Bay Railway will span the Barren Ground between Lake Athabasca and Fort Churchill, a gap about equivalent in length to the stretch from The Pas to Fort Churchill—carrying frozen reindeer carcases and fish from the inexhaustible stores in the lakes of the interior to the markets of the East and of Europe ?

The possibilities in minerals have already been touched upon, but there is the Peace River country, an agricultural empire in itself, as yet barely scratched, which in a few years will be producing millions of bushels of the finest wheat in the world and great herds of sleek cattle seeking a way to market. As has been said, the Peace is navigable from the Rockies almost to its mouth, and with the removal of one or two barriers steamers might load grain and cattle at the foothills of the Rockies and discharge their cargoes at the terminus of this second Hudson Bay line at the east end of Lake Athabasca for transportation to a port on Hudson Bay. This route is the natural eastern outlet for the Peace River's fertile prairies.

There are valuable and extensive forests of spruce and other woods, too, in the valleys of the Peace, Athabasca and Clearwater Rivers, and much of this timber could be landed cheaply at the east end of

Lake Athabasca to supply the needs of the treeless country beyond.

The fur trade is still and will for many more years be one of the most important industries of the North. More business for this second Hudson Bay road—export of furs, import of merchandise for the trade! Salt, gypsum, marble and tar are other natural products of the country. Oil has been discovered in the Mackenzie River basin. Even the moss which covers the Barren Ground is valuable for civilized purposes; it was employed extensively during the late war, and is said to make the finest possible dressing for wounds, with twice the absorbent capacity of sponge. The Silent Land produces valuable medicinal plants in great variety. The wild tea found there was in common use by both natives and Hudson's Bay Company men before the imported article was obtainable. It is said to have the same stimulating properties as the cultivated plant, besides being helpful in chest troubles.

One can scarcely imagine a time when the Arctic prairies will be growing cereals, but—twelve million reindeer! Aeroplanes will soon be covering in a few hours or days a region that in the past has been practically inaccessible; it promises to become as well known as Ontario or Manitoba. Aeroplanes and a railroad—what a combination for the opening of virgin territory! Canada is just commencing to be discovered. What a land! What a future! What possibilities!

Can you imagine a more fascinating prospect?

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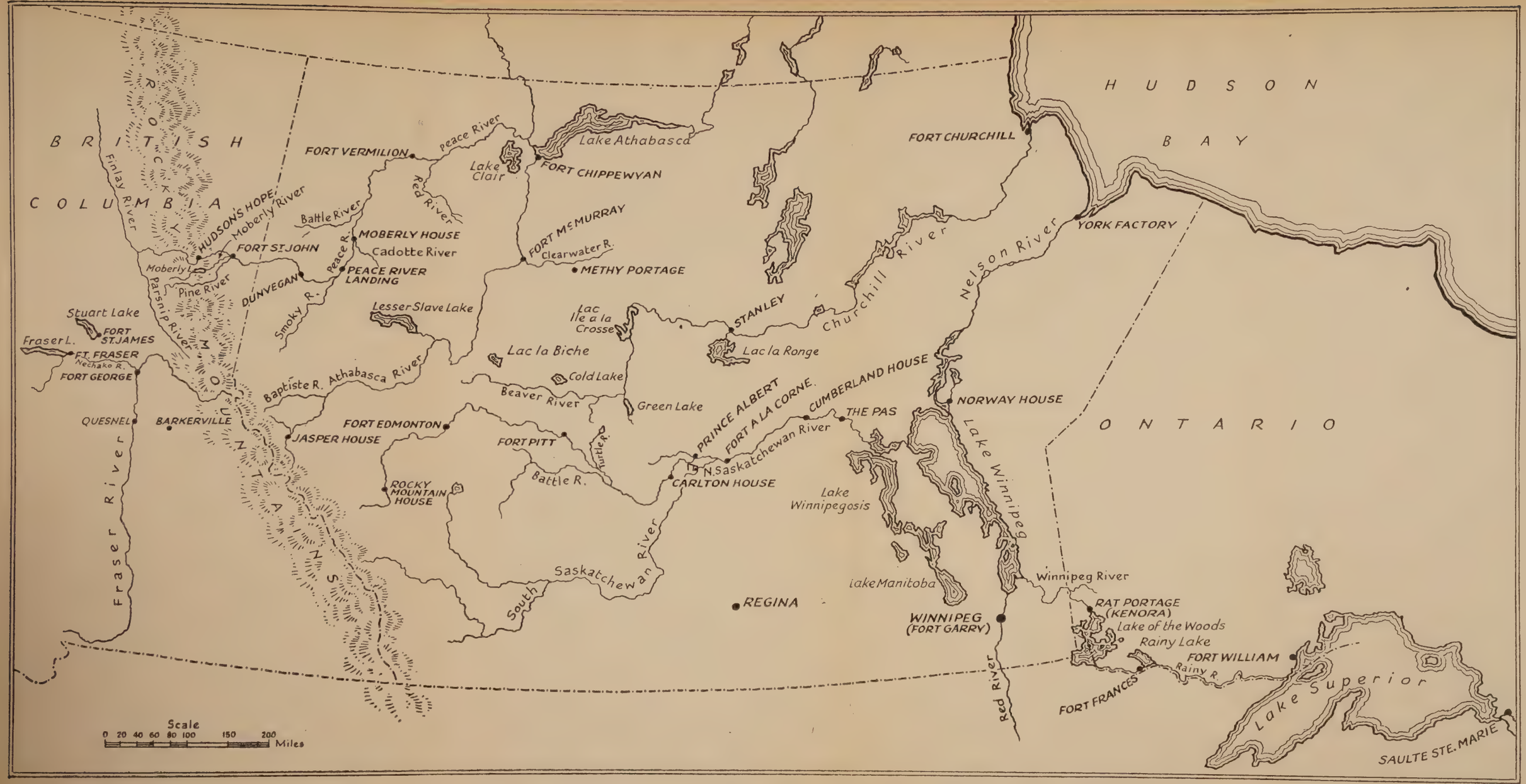

MAP OF CANADIAN NORTH-WEST, SHOWING TERRITORY COVERED BY H. J. MOBERLY IN HIS TRAVELS